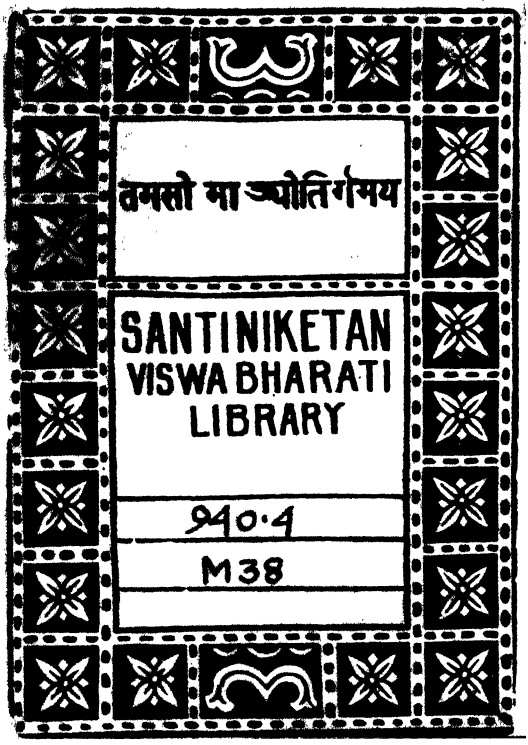

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THE SECRET PRESS IN BELGIUM

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

BELGIANS UNDER THE GERMAN EAGLE

TRANSLATED BY

BERNARD MIALL

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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.

THE SECRET PRESS IN BELGIUM

BY

JEAN MASSART

Vice-Director of the Class of Sciences
in the Royal Academy of Belgium.

TRANSLATED BY BERNARD MIALL.

WITH 14 ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON:
T. FISHER UNWIN, LTD.
ADELPHI TERRACE

First published in 1918.

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CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE - - - - - - - - - vii

I. WHAT IS FORBIDDEN. WHAT IS TOLERATED.

A.—PROHIBITED PUBLICATIONS.

1. The Importation of Books and Newspapers - - - - - 1
2. Reprinted Books and Newspapers 6
3. Original Publications - - - 11
4. German Regulations affecting the Press - - - - - - 30
5. The Aerial Supplement of *La Libre Belgique* - - - - 36
6. Counterfeit Prohibited Newspapers - - - - - - 37

B.—AUTHORISED PUBLICATIONS - - - 39

1. Gratuitous Information - - 40
2. German Publications Sold in Belgium - - - - - - 61
3. Newspapers which profess to be Belgian - - - - - - 78
4. Dutch Newspapers Allowed to Enter Belgium - - - - 95

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		PAGE
I.	(*a*) The Cover of the *Revue hebdomadaire de la Presse française* - *To face*	6
	(*b*) German Stamp Surcharged *Belgien* - - - - - - - ,, ,,	6
II.	The First Page of No. 62 of *La Libre Belgique* - - - - - - ,, ,,	7
III.	The First Page of No. 83 of *La Libre Belgique* - - - - - - ,, ,,	14
IV.	The First Page of No. 81 of *La Libre Belgique* - - - - - - ,, ,,	15
V.	The First Page of *De Vlaamsche Leeuw* ,, ,,	22
VI.	The First Page of *De Vrije Stem* - ,, ,,	23
VII.	"German Justice in Louvain" - ,, ,,	62
VIII.	"Armed Guard of the Representatives of a Belgian Locality" - ,, ,,	63
IX.	(*a*) "Removal of the Inhabitants of a Belgian Village" - - - ,, ,,	70
	(*b*) "Our Troops on the March Through a Burning Village" ,, ,,	70
X.	A Real Franc-Tireur - - - ,, ,,	71
XI.	A "Faked" German Postcard: The Francs-Tireurs of Louvain - - ,, ,,	78
XII.	A Brussels Newspaper as returned from the Censor's Office - - ,, ,,	79

PREFACE

In another volume, "Belgians under the German Eagle,"[1] I have endeavoured to show how greatly the German mentality differs from our own; in place of the terror which the German strives to inspire, the Belgian displays the profoundest calm—a most irritating form of response—and an ingenuous humour.

The object of the present work is to describe one of the forms assumed by this resistance: the clandestine publication and distribution of newspapers, pamphlets, books, picture-postcards, etc.

While the above-mentioned volume was based upon documents which originated beyond the Rhine, or which were at least adorned by the official stamp of the German censorship, this present work makes little use of any but uncensored writings. The reader will thus appreciate the contrast between the two classes of literature.

Until August, 1915, I was able to contribute to the prohibited Press. Since escaping from my native land, I have had at my disposal the greater part of the clandestine publications appearing in Belgium. However, I have occasionally had to content myself

[1] *Comment les Belges résistent à la domination allemande*, published by M.M. Payot (Paris and Lausanne); the English translation of which, under the above title, was published by Mr. T. Fisher Unwin.

with copying articles reproduced in Belgian newspapers appearing in Holland.

* * * * *

Every newspaper publishes two kinds of article: those which are written specially for its readers, and those which are extracted from other newspapers or reviews. The secret Belgian Press is written almost exclusively by willing helpers, not by professional journalists, whose style would too readily betray them. Those articles which have the advantage in the matter of form are therefore, as will readily be understood, those which are borrowed from foreign publications. But we are assuming that these are familiar: for which reason the reader will find, in this volume, next to nothing from *La Soupe*, or the *Revue hebdomadaire de la Presse française*, which are the leading journals of our Secret Press, but which contain hardly anything but reprinted or translated matter.

We have almost invariably reproduced articles in their entirety, without elisions. We have realised only too vividly, thanks to the profit which the Germans have derived from the mutilation of documents, what a dishonest procedure such mutilation is. If the article is really too long, or contains passages of no interest to us, we indicate where the suppressions have been effected.

It was necessary to make a selection of articles for reproduction. We reproduce only those which best reveal the contrast between the Belgian and the German mentality.

The author's comments are as brief as possible;

they exist only to assist the reader fully to appreciate the influences of the Secret Press; for which purpose it was necessary to indicate the state of mind existing in Belgium before the publication of these articles, and the effect which they produced upon the Belgian mentality.

* * * * *

These prohibited writings are a mere episode, almost an insignificant episode, in the daily struggle which the Belgians in Belgium have to sustain against the demands of the Power in occupation—demands which are increasingly harsh, increasingly unjustified. But the Secret Press, better than any other form of activity, enables the foreigner to realise the indomitable energy and the persistent good humour of a people which will not allow itself to be crushed.

J. M.

Villa Thuret,
Antibes, January, 1917.



THE SECRET PRESS IN BELGIUM

I

WHAT IS FORBIDDEN. WHAT IS TOLERATED

A.—PROHIBITED PUBLICATIONS

1. The Importation of Books and Newspapers

During the first fortnight of the war, the population of Brussels was enabled to partake of the general excitement. On the 20th of August, 1914, everything was changed. In the morning the newspapers were still offered for sale by their busy vendors. By the evening this was a thing of the past. The Germans were in the city, and not a single newspaper had accepted their censorship; moreover, the plant of certain printing-houses had been deliberately rendered useless.

The excitement of the first days was followed, without transition, by the most lugubrious calm. Presently the German placards appeared, announcing the success of our enemies: the capture of Namur, the defeat of the French in Luxemburg, the siege of Maubeuge, the entry of the Austrians into Serbia, and then the rapid

march of the German armies upon Paris, which the bodies of cavalry were to reach in two days.

The people of Brussels naturally refused to believe the German "official news," the more so as their Burgomaster had just confronted the authorities in occupation by a flat contradiction, which they were careful to disregard.[1]

For the rest, their battalions "on the way to Paris" had not ceased their march through the city, goose-stepping on their way, with music at their head, when audacious persons had organised a service of imported newspapers: *Le Matin* and *La Métropole* from Antwerp, *La Flandre libérale* and *Le Bien publique* from Gand. From the last days of August the secret newspaper service was in regular working order, and by 9 o'clock we were reading, in Brussels, *La Flandre libérale*, published the same morning in Gand. The first copies leaving the press were brought by automobile to a point close to the German outposts at Ninove, Lennick, or Hal, at a distance of nine miles from Brussels There the parcels were concealed in baskets of vegetable, and were thus brought into the city. They were unpacked in the back premises of some *cabaret*, a different house being chosen every day. The newsvendors went to work immediately. Some took up their position in the main thoroughfares and at the street corners, where they ostensibly sold picture-postcards, patriotic emblems, or newspapers authorised by the censorship. Selling such wares, they would very quietly inquire: "*La Flandre?*"—"How much?"

[1] See Davignon, *La Belgique et l'Allemagne*, p. 29; and J. Massart, "Belgians under the German Eagle," p. 233.

As a rule it cost 75 centimes in the forenoon, but later in the day it was sold for 40 or 50 centimes. Others, armed with a few boxes of grapes, would repair to the suburbs; the fruit was merely to put the Germans off the scent, and to enable the vendors to ring at the houses of their regular customers; the moment the door had closed upon them, the newspapers emerged from the depths of their pockets.

The waggons of the market-gardeners brought into Brussels not only the Belgian newspapers, but foreign publications also. Those most widely read were: *Le Journal, Le Petit Parisien* and *Le Matin* (of Paris), *Le Temps, The Times, The Daily Mail,* sometimes *De Tijd* and *De Telegraaf,* and occasionally, but very seldom, the *Journal de Genève.*

From time to time the German police succeeded in seizing the contraband newspapers. On such days we received no news until the afternoon, when the papers were sold by occasional vendors, acting independently; and on these occasions *La Flandre libérale* or *La Métropole* would cost two or three francs.

This organisation did its work in a normal manner, despite the severities of the Germans, until the capture of Antwerp and the occupation of Flanders (with the exception of the loop of the Yser). From mid-October the last Belgian dailies vanished from occupied Belgium. A few reappeared elsewhere: *L'Indépendance belge* in London; *La Métropole* also in London, on a page of *The Standard; Le XX.e Siècle* in Havre. They reached us along with the French and English newspapers.

Sometimes we used to get one or another of the occasional newspapers which were published abroad

by Belgians: *L'Écho d'Anvers* at Bergen-op-Zoom, *Les Nouvelles* and *Le Courrier de la Meuse* at Maestricht, *L'Écho belge*, *Vrij Belgie* and the *Belgisch Dagblad* at The Hague, *La Belgique* at Rotterdam, *De Vlaamsche Stem* at Amsterdam, *De Stem uit Belgie* and *La Belgique nouvelle* in London, *Le Franco-Belge* at Folkestone, *Le Courrier Belge* at Derby, *La Patrie Belge* and *La Nouvelle Belgique* in Paris, *Le Courrier de l'Armée* (*De Legerbode*) and *Het Vaterland* at Havre, *Ons Vaderland* and *De Belgische Standaard* at La Panne (in free Belgium).

From day to day circulation between Holland and Belgium was rendered more difficult; the sentinels had orders to fire on the sellers of newspapers who sought to cross the frontier, and they did not hesitate to do so. But even after the frontier had been embellished by a circuit of electrified wires, then by two circuits, and finally by three, and after a zone had been marked out into which it was forbidden to enter, the foreign newspapers used still to find their way into Belgium. There was very seldom a day on which all the smugglers were arrested or killed.[1] Often enough, however, a voluminous newspaper like *The Times* found a purchaser at 200 francs. But *The Times*, as a rule, used to sell for 5 francs, and the French newspapers for 2 to 3 francs.

The sale of newspapers in the streets has almost entirely ceased: the risks are too great. German spies accost the sellers of censored newspapers, doing

[1] In December, 1914, the German sentinels shot two newsvendors at Putte (province of Antwerp). In July, 1915, four persons who were carrying newspapers and letters were killed in Limburg.

their best to obtain some prohibited sheet. If the unlucky newsvendor complies the German immediately seizes him by the collar. It was an affair of this sort which cost the City of Brussels a fine of £200,000. A non-commissioned officer in mufti, playing the spy, wanted to arrest a newsvendor who had given him a prohibited newspaper. But the newsvendor resisted, and the spy began to belabour him with all his might. Two members of the Brussels police force, De Rijcke and Seghers, unaware of the fact that they were dealing with a spy (for it had been understood that the German police would always display a distinctive sign) intervened in favour of the newsvendor, whom they supposed to be unjustly attacked by a private individual. The result was that De Rijcke was sentenced to five years' and Seghers to three years' imprisonment; moreover, the City of Brussels was condemned to pay a fine of 5,000,000 francs.[1]

* * * * *

Not only newspapers, but books and pamphlets are brought into Belgium. We are thus enabled to read everything of interest which is published abroad. The number of copies imported amounts, in general, to no more than a few dozen, but they are not allowed to moulder on the library shelves. They are passed uninterruptedly from reader to reader, until the day when a domiciliary search causes them to fall into the hands of the German police.

While the prohibited newspapers are the object of a regular trade, which provides many persons with a

[1] See "Belgians under the German Eagle," pp. 147, 157.

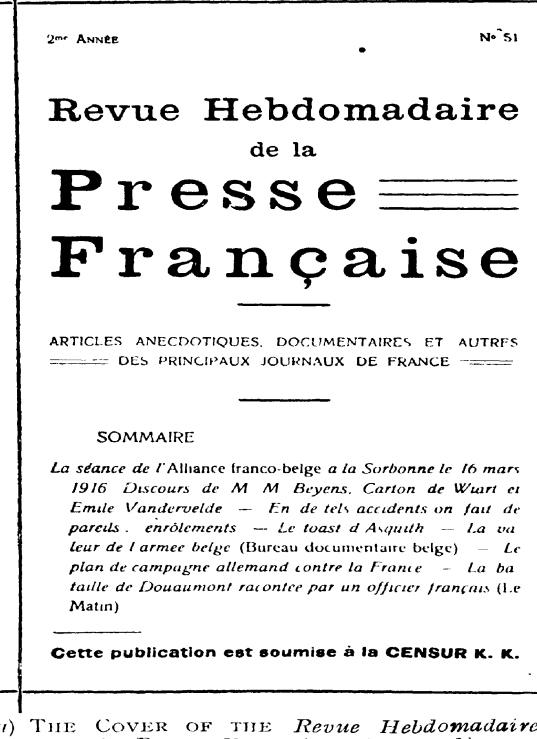
living, books, on the other hand, are introduced at the instance of physicians, advocates, professors, artists, etc., who do not aim at making a profit. Thus the works of Bedier (*Les Crimes allemandes*), Weiss (*La Violation de la neutralité belge et luxembourgeoise par l'Allemagne*) and Durkheim and Denis (*Qui a voulu la guerre ?*) have been sold by hundreds at 75 centimes (instead of 50 centimes). At the same price one could obtain Van den Heuvel's *La Neutralité belge*. "*J'accuse*" fetches 5 francs; Waxweiler's *La Belgique neutre et loyale*, 3 francs 50. Even voluminous works are introduced; for example, Jan Frith's *De Oorlog in Prent*, which is sold for 9 francs, and "King Albert's Book"; this latter was at first 5 francs, but the immense demand for it rapidly increased the price, and the last examples found purchasers at 20 francs (the profits being applied to charitable purposes).

In addition to the pamphlets printed abroad and partly distributed in Brussels, we must mention those which appeared in August and September, 1914, before the censorship was applied in all its severity, but were afterwards prohibited. Among them were: *Adolphe Max, son administration du 20 août au 26 septembre 1914*; *Lettre ouverte d'un Hollandais à un ami allemand*; *La Dernière Entrevue du Chancelier allemand et de Sir E. Goschen*; *Discours prononcée à la Chambre des Communes et à la Chambre des Députés de France*, etc.

2. Reprinted Books and Newspapers

It will be understood that, in spite of the activity of those who introduce foreign books and newspapers,

PLATE I.



2me Année — N° 51

Revue Hebdomadaire de la Presse Française

ARTICLES ANECDOTIQUES, DOCUMENTAIRES ET AUTRES DES PRINCIPAUX JOURNAUX DE FRANCE

SOMMAIRE

*La séance de l'*Alliance franco-belge *a la Sorbonne le 16 mars 1916 Discours de M M Beyens, Carton de Wiart et Emile Vandervelde — En de tels accidents on fait de pareils . enrôlements — Le toast d Asquith — La valeur de l armee belge* (Bureau documentaire belge) — *Le plan de campagne allemand contre la France — La bataille de Douaumont racontee par un officier français* (Le Matin)

Cette publication est soumise à la CENSUR K. K.

(*a*) The Cover of the *Revue Hebdomadaire de la Presse Française*. (*Reduced.*)

(*b*) German Stamp Surcharged ***Belgien*** Employed in Invaded Belgium.

PLATE II.



NUMÉRO 62 — DEUXIÈME ANNÉE — FÉVRIER 1916

PRIX DU NUMÉRO : [illegible]

LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

FONDÉE LE 1er FÉVRIER 1915

CHAGRIN D'AMOUR

Depuis un an déjà je te cherche nuit et jour
Petite abbaye, tu m'échappes toujours.

THE FIRST PAGE OF NO. 62 OF *La Libre Belgique*. (*Reduced.*)

into Belgium, only a few privileged persons are able to read them in the original text. It was, however, an urgent matter to make the entire population immune to the German virus, which would otherwise have soaked into men's minds and would have sapped their courage. For this reason means were taken immediately to inform the people of Brussels of the progress of military operations. Day by day numbers of persons buy French and English newspapers and copy, upon the typewriter, the most significant passages. These leaflets are then secretly distributed, either gratuitously, or in return for a trifling sum which more often than otherwise finds its way to the Red Cross, or the National Committee for Relief and Alimentation.

News-sheets of this character, which number about fifteen, are incessantly opposing the demoralising influence of the German placards There is accordingly nothing surprising in the fact that the authorities do their utmost to ferret out all typewriters. Of course, it is principally owing to the efforts of the *agents provocateurs* that they contrive to lay hands on the editors of war news. But to imprison a patriot is one thing; to check a patriotic propaganda is another; scarcely is one editor sentenced when another takes his place.

In addition to the leaflets, which enable readers day by day to follow the events of the war, other publications reprint chronicles, poems, manifestoes, speeches, diplomatic documents, and articles of every kind.

One of these publications is the *Revue hebdomadaire de la Presse française*, which appears regularly in numbers containing sixteen pages (Plate I.) It announces

that it is "subjected to the Royal and Imperial censorship"—*soumise à la censure K. K.*—and contains, in addition to a few original articles, extracts from French newspapers, such as *Le Temps, Le Figaro, Le Matin, Le Journal des Débats;* or Swiss newspapers such as *Le Journal de Genève* and *La Gazette de Lausanne;* it also reproduces articles from the *Bureau documentaire belge,* the *Courrier de l'Armée belge,* the *XX^e Siècle, L'Écho belge,* and other Belgian journals. From time to time an issue would be devoted entirely to a single writer. Thus the *Revue* reproduced Anatole France's *Sur la Voie glorieuse,* and a fine series of drawings by Louis Raemaekers. (It apologised for being unable to *grafer* these *au purin.*)[1]

L'Écho de ce que les journaux censurés n'osent ou ne peuvent pas dire appears at regular intervals.

Another publication of the same kind, *La Soupe,* gives fifty typewritten pages weekly, which are equivalent to more than a hundred pages of an octavo volume. It was through *La Soupe* that we learned of the *Rapports de la Commission d'enquête belge* (Reports of the Belgian Commission of Inquiry); it also contained certain extracts from the *Livre Bleu* and the *Livre Jaune,* the French text of the "Appeal of the Ninety-three German Intellectuals," a dozen replies to this manifesto, M. Romain Rolland's letter to Gerhart Hauptmann and the latter's reply, the poems of M. Rostand (*La Cathédrale*), M. Miguel Zamacöu (*La Cathédrale de Reims, Les Belges*), Emile Verhaeren (*La Belgique sanglante*), Mgr. Mercier's Pastoral Letter,

[1] *Graver au burin* = to engrave with the burin. *Grafer au purin* (which is how a German might speak the words) to scrawl in liquid filth.—(*Tr.*)

M. Pierre Nothomb's *La Belgique martyre*, the speeches delivered by M. Henry Carton de Wiart at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, by Mr. Lloyd George at the Queen's Hall and by M. Maurice Maeterlinck at La Scala in Milan, the letters of Maître Théodor to Baron von Bissing, and the sermons of R. P. Janvier and M. Bloch, the Chief Rabbi of Belgium, etc., etc.

The same journal also kept us informed of the methods of the German propaganda. It enabled us to estimate at their true value, which is not great, the publications of the Teutonic propagandists: *Journal de la guerre*, *La Guerre*, *Die Wahrheit über den Krieg* (The Truth about the War), *Sturmnacht in Löwen* (A Night of Alarms in Louvain), etc. These extracts were widely circulated. We believe, indeed, that it is impossible to assist our propaganda more usefully than by giving publicity to the propagandist pamphlets of our enemies, in order to make it clear to all how they distort the truth. Thus by publishing their narrative *Cruauté contre un couvent*[1] (Brutal attack upon a Convent), they rendered us an inestimable service, so clumsy and obvious were the lies contained therein. Articles by Captain Bloem ("The Campaign of Atrocities")[2] and von Bissing, junior ("Belgium under the German Administration"), etc., were translated and published.

Numbers of drawings also were reproduced by the Belgians, either by mechanical processes, or by photography. Let us mention one instance. A copy of the admirable collection of drawings by Louis Raemaekers, *De Toppunt der Beschaving*, was smuggled

[1] See "Belgians under the German Eagle," pp. 225–8.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 197.

into Belgium. It passed rapidly from one house to another, until the day when it was discovered by the Germans on the occasion of a domiciliary search. Needless to say, it was immediately withdrawn from circulation. However, one of the first persons to be entrusted with the collection had taken the precaution of photographing all the plates, and very soon the single example was replaced by a host of copies.

Later on a special prohibited journal, *La Cravache*, distributed Raemaekers' drawings all over the country.

Even music was secretly printed and sold in Brussels. "Tipperary," for example, was to be obtained for one franc (the money being applied to charitable purposes) during the winter of 1914–15.

* * * * *

So far we have spoken principally of reproductions by typewriting or by photography. But such cumbrous processes are naturally inapplicable to volumes of any size. These are, of course, reproduced on the printing-press. The first volume which was thus reproduced was Waxweiler's *La Belgique neutre et loyale.* We had received a few copies from Switzerland—by way of Germany!—but the thickness of the paper on which they were printed rendered their distribution a matter of difficulty. It was therefore reprinted on thin paper. Since then Pierre Nothomb's articles on *La Belgique martyre* have been reprinted; Baron Beyen's articles on *L'Empereur Guillaume, La Famille Impériale,* the *Rapports de la Commission d'enquête belge,* the *Livre Jaune,* and many other volumes. *La Libre Belgique* published "*J'accuse*" as a supplement. The most delicate operation in this connection was the

translation into French of "King Albert's Book." Many thousands of examples had been sold, for the benefit of *La Soupe* (the name by which the National Committee of Relief and Alimentation is known in Brussels). But a second edition had become necessary. Now just as this second edition was being printed the Germans invaded the offices and seized not only the staff, but the formes of type, the paper, the sheets already printed, and the entire plant of the printing-office. They thought they had finally got rid of "King Albert's Book," when, to their profound annoyance, only a week later, 10,000 fresh copies appeared on the secret market.

Here is another example of reprinting. In May, 1916, a "war edition" appeared at Arlon of M. H. Grinauty's *Six mois de guerre en Belgique, par un soldat belge.*

3. Original Publications

Let us now consider the most interesting of our publications: the newspapers and pamphlets which contain not reproductions of books, narratives, poems, etc., written abroad for foreign consumption, but articles written by Belgians residing in Belgium for the benefit of their fellow-prisoners.

The first place of all is occupied by a newspaper, *La Libre Belgique.* Between February 1st, 1915 and December 31st, 1916, one hundred numbers of this journal were published.

Only those who have lived under a torturing, detested tyranny can understand the eager curiosity with which the reader of *La Libre Belgique* awaits his newspaper.

When will the next issue appear? No one knows, for the journal is *regularly irregular*, as the sub-title announces.

How will it reach us? We do not know this either. Sometimes it is dropped into the letter-box, enclosed in an envelope; sometimes a friend slips it mysteriously into your hand; sometimes it is found in a prominent place on the desk or writing-table (it was thus that Baron von Bissing used to receive it).

Where is it printed? Mystery? If we are to believe the announcement at the head of the front page, its telegraphic address is "Kommandantur—Brussels." As for the publishing and editorial offices, "as these cannot be a very reposeful spot, they are installed in an automobile cellar!"

Who are the contributors? The Jesuits, say some; the Freemasons, so others assert. One statement is as true as the other, for there are no longer clericals, nor Socialists, nor Liberals, nor Flamingants, nor Wallingants[1] in Belgium; there are only Belgians, all inspired by the same ardour, and all, without distinction, doing their duties as patriots.

How many copies of this journal are printed? Ten thousand, so they say. But no one can tell us precisely; not even the most audacious of those who distribute these copies. The individual who undertakes to distribute *La Libre Belgique* receives a certain number of copies of each issue. Of these he makes three or four packets, and hands them to as many friends; each of these latter once again divides his stock among a small number of reliable persons, and so on, until at

[1] Members of the Flemish or Walloon parties.—(*Tr.*)

last the journal comes into the hands of those who distribute it among their "customers."

Each distributor, therefore, knows from whom he receives the copies of the journal, and to whom he passes them on; but he knows nothing of the higher and lower steps of the ladder. Each divides his copies among a few persons with whom he is well acquainted; so that he does not need to commit their names to writing.

The advantages of this method are obvious. If, on the occasion of a domiciliary visit, the police of the Kommandantur chance to lay hands upon a parcel of copies of *La Libre Belgique*—and all things are possible—they may condemn the possessor to pay a fine of several thousand of marks, if he is rich, or sentence him to several months' imprisonment, if he is poor; but they will not be able to discover whom the journals were intended for, nor, above all, where they came from. The Belgian's talent for conspiracy has been whetted to such a degree, and the intermediaries between the publisher and the reader are so numerous, that when it is desired to submit an idea to the editors it takes ten days to a fortnight for the message to reach the "automobile cellar," stage by stage.

From time to time the first page of the journal is illustrated. No. 80 shows us Wilhelm II. in Hell, after Wiertz's well-known picture, "*Napoleon en enfer.*" No. 52 contained an excellent portrait of King Albert. The anniversary number (No. 62) shows us poor Baron von Bissing in the midst of a mountain of search-warrants, intended for the editorial staff of *La Libre Belgique*; it also shows us the "automobile cellar" in which we see the editorial office is installed,

that in which the printing-press is operating, and that in which the packing is done; and, further, the domiciliary search of a water-closet, and the arrest of the statue of André Vesalius (Plate II). No. 83, "censored July 21st, 1916," contains a drawing, *Vers la gloire*, enclosed in a frame of the Belgian colours, published on the occasion of the National Festival of Belgium (Plate III). No. 81 contains a reproduction of a picture-postcard which was sold in Germany, showing the Belgian lion ridden by a Prussian (Plate IV.)

But the best illustration published so far is that which appeared in No. 30. It is a portrait of the Governor-General, Baron von Bissing, reading *La Libre Belgique*. From this moment the reward offered for denouncing *La Libre Belgique* was no longer 5,000 francs (£200), but 25,000 francs (£1,000) and then 75,000 francs (£3,000) They take us for Germans! They imagine that interest will make us forget duty!

However, our tyrants did their very utmost to escape from the nightmare of *La Libre Belgique*. In the spring of 1915 the houses of all those who could possibly be suspected of assisting in its distribution were turned upside down by domiciliary visits. We lived in a perpetual state of uncertainty; at every ring of the bell we asked ourselves if it did not announce a domiciliary visit After the war a list will be published of houses which were ransacked from cellar to loft, although the police never recognised, under their "make-up," the packets of *La Libre Belgique*.

The hunt for prohibited newspapers was carried on even in the street Advocates, departmental clerks, officials, in short all those who carried portfolios were arrested, and their papers were turned upside

PLATE III.



NUMERO 83 — DEUXIÈME ANNÉE — JUILLET 1918

PRIX DU NUMERO — Etablissons de zèle à l'effet (prière aux revendeurs de ne pas dépasser cette limite)

LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

FONDÉE
LE 1er FÉVRIER 1915

BULLETIN DE PROPAGANDE PATRIOTIQUE — REGULIÈREMENT IRRÉGULIER
NE SE SOUMETTANT A AUCUNE CENSURE

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE
KOMMANDANTUR — BRUXELLES

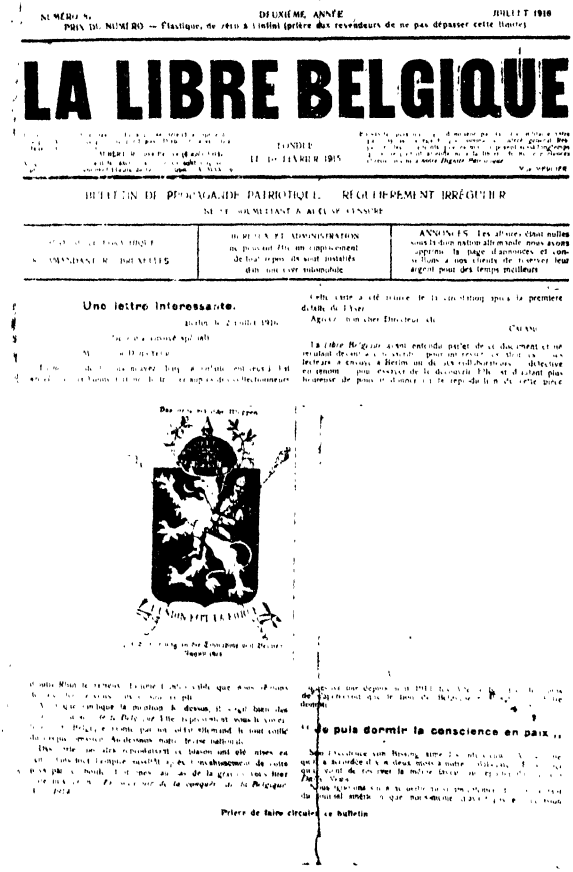
BUREAUX ET ADMINISTRATION
ne peuvent être indiqués, à cause
de la censure, ils sont installés
dans une cave quelconque

ANNONCES — Les ailes de clarté publient
nos annonces à la feuille ne savaient
s'appeler le pays ne sera et nous
certifions à nos clients de nos rares leur
nous pas des lettres inutiles

VERS LA GLOIRE. (D'après J. P. Portaels)

THE FIRST PAGE OF NO. 83 OF *La Libre Belgique*. (*Reduced*)

PLATE IV.



DEUXIÈME ANNÉE — JUILLET 1916

LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

LONDRE — 15 DE FÉVRIER 1915

BULLETIN DE PROPAGANDE PATRIOTIQUE. — RÉGULIÈREMENT IRRÉGULIER

NE SE SOUMETTANT À AUCUNE CENSURE

ANNONCES. Les affaires étant nulles sous la domination allemande nous avons supprimé la page d'annonces et conseillons à nos clients de conserver leur argent pour des temps meilleurs

Une lettre intéressante.

Londres, le 2 juillet 1916.

Monsieur le Directeur,

La *Libre Belgique* a reçu hier matin le document ci-joint. Nous nous empressons de le transmettre à nos lecteurs, en leur demandant de faire le plus large usage de la lettre qu'il contient.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Directeur, l'assurance de nos sentiments les plus distingués.

Pour la Rédaction :

« Je puis dormir la conscience en paix. »

Prière de faire circuler ce bulletin

THE FIRST PAGE OF NO. 81 OF *La Libre Belgique*. (*Reduced.*)

down in the hope of discovering *La Libre Belgique* among them.

The people of Brussels relate that on several occasions the Kommandantur received anonymous letters giving precise information as to the place where *La Libre Belgique* was produced. The police used to arrive at the spot with great secrecy; demanding entry into the house, they would swiftly descend a staircase, rush along the corridors, push open the door indicated, and find themselves in—a water-closet! The "theatrical chronicle" in No. 39 of *La Libre Belgique* relates a frolic of this kind, and also the misadventure of the Germans who went to arrest André Vesalius, whose statue stands in the Place des Barricades, in Brussels! (See Plate II.)

Here are a few facts which will give some idea of the desperation with which *La Libre Belgique* is sought for. A Redemptorist father, the Reverend Father Verriest, was condemned to pay a fine of 4,000 marks for having helped to distribute it. By a judgment of the military court of Antwerp, dated the 18th of February, 1916, thirty-two persons were sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from three to eighteen months, for having assisted in the distribution of prohibited newspapers. The military court of Hasselt condemned a restaurant-keeper and his wife to pay fines and to close their café, *In het Vosken*, for six weeks, for distributing *La Libre Belgique*. The temporary Burgomaster of Brussels, M. Temonnier, had his private house and his office at the Hôtel de Ville turned upside down; naturally, nothing was discovered. M. Temonnier protested against these proceedings (on the 27th of December, 1915):

To the Governor-General.

The German police have just conducted perquisitions at my office at the Hôtel de Ville and in my private house.

As a private person I should not think of complaining of being treated like so many of my fellow-citizens. but as one fulfilling the functions of burgomaster. I must protest against this perquisition, which, being made in the Hôtel de Ville, is a most serious offence against the dignity and authority of the first magistrate of the city, at a moment when he has need of all the prestige which invests his functions, in order to ensure and maintain order and public tranquillity.

Believe me, etc.,

The Acting Burgomaster,

M. TEMONNIER.

The reply was worthy of the German brutality:

Brussels, *1st January*, 1916.

To the letter of the 27th December, 1915, No. 4864, I have the honour to reply that the military police had good reasons to make a domiciliary search in your private house and also in your office.

Your protest against the operations of search undertaken in your official chambers is without foundation and without object, as you cannot invoke special privileges for the official premises of the Hôtel de Ville.

(*Signed*) FRHR. VON BISSING.

In June, 1916, the authorities imprisoned, ostensibly for distributing *La Libre Belgique*, a youth of sixteen, M. Léon Lenertz, son of a Director of Graphic Studies in the University of Louvain, who was shot in front of his house in the Boulevard de Tirlemont, during the tragic night of the 25th of August, 1914.

In September, 1916, seven of the leading printers of Gand were imprisoned. They were to remain

in prison, it appeared, until the editors of *La Libre Belgique* should reveal themselves. However, they were only detained for a month.

Baron von Bissing has been particularly persistent in seeking for the editors of clandestine journals in the convents.

The Collège Saint-Michel, which is the principal Jesuit establishment in Brussels, has on several occasions been searched and ransacked from top to bottom ; and Father Dubar was sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude.

Perquisitions at the College Saint-Michel.

On Saturday, the 18th of March, early in the morning, eighty Prussian bandits, armed to the teeth, presented themselves, for purposes of search, at the College Saint-Michel, Boulevard Saint-Michel, in Brussels.

After all the pupils had been dismissed they began their exploits, and naturally, since there was nothing to seize, returned as wise as they went.

These imbeciles were searching for . . . *La Libre Belgique.*

Once more Von Bissing has drawn an empty covert. And the elusive automobile still goes onward . . . onward.

(*Écho de ce que les journaux censurés n'osent ou ne peuvent pas dire*, April, 1916, p. 33.)

On the 4th of June, 1916, the Governor-General appealed to Mgr. Heylen, Bishop of Namur, requesting him to bring his influence to bear upon his clergy. After remarking how painful it was to him to behave with severity—but with justice—toward priests, he invoked . . . yes, it is the truth !—he invoked the Hague Convention. He then added :

If it is desired to avoid the passing of sentences, one can expect this result only from the quiet and non-political behaviour of the ecclesiastics themselves.

It is for this reason that I address myself to your Lordship (*Votre Grandeur*) with the request that you will so influence your subordinates that they shall abstain, in the exercise of their sacred functions, and otherwise, from all political activity, much less render themselves guilty of serious infringements of my prescriptions. Above all it is important that they shall be dissuaded from the diffusion of inadmissible writings, in which ecclesiastics have lately played a considerable part.

May I beg your Lordship to inform me if I may count on his collaboration in the direction indicated? After all, I am only demanding the observance of those guarantees as to the good behaviour of the clergy to which the Episcopate has already subscribed.

Here are a few passages from Mgr. Heylen's reply:

Namur, 15*th June*, 1916.

EXCELLENCY,

I am happy to learn, from Your Excellency's letter, dated the 4th of June, that you are completely sensible of the deplorable and disturbing effect produced upon the Belgian people by the daily arrests of ecclesiastics, their imprisonment, the sentences passed upon them, and the deportation of a certain number of them to the prisons or camps of Germany.

On several occasions I have expressed what I feel in this connection, and I will to-day repeat it to Your Excellency, with complete freedom. The maintenance of order in the country is not favoured—far from it!—by these methods of intimidation and violence: it would be achieved more effectually by a line of conduct which would be in harmony with the temperament of the Belgian people.

* * * * *

In this connection the German authority must not forget that it has also duties to fulfil, and we have as much right

as it has to invoke the Convention of The Hague. This Convention was not devised solely in the interest of the invader, but also in that of the occupied country; on behalf of the latter it ensures respect for that which is highest and noblest in the human soul—the love of country; and it requires the occupying army to avoid offering any insult to this patriotism; now, in this respect we are being subjected to grievous acts of violence, and it is this that we most bitterly deplore in the German occupation.

It seems as though there is everywhere a resolve to oppose, stifle, and repress the sense of patriotism, the maintenance of which is nevertheless a right, and is moreover indispensable to the tranquillity of the people. I will mention only two instances. Last December, on the occasion of a despatch of provisions to the prisoners from my diocese interned in Germany, I was forbidden to express the wish that they would quickly be restored to their beloved country; these words on my postcard were suppressed.

One of my Vicars General, who about the same time was summoned to appear before the secret police, discovered that he was charged with having delivered an address in the course of which he begged his hearers to pray for our well-beloved King and his august family.

* * * * *

Moreover, things are permitted against us which are not tolerated in respect of the German Army; on the one hand Belgian priests are forbidden the possession of publications which do not eulogise Germany, while, on the other hand, German chaplains and others are permitted to disseminate writings of a provocative nature and insulting to our country.

In connection with the futile efforts made by the Germans to suppress *La Libre Belgique*, let us lay special stress on the ardour with which the Belgians busy themselves in distributing it. Here is a characteristic little detail: the first twenty issues of the

paper were reprinted three or four months after publication.

* * * * *

Other clandestine periodicals make war upon the German methods: *La Verité*, of which seven issues were published in May and June, 1915; *La Belge*, which appeared from September to November, 1915; *Patrie!* which is in its second year; a Flemish paper, *De Vlaamsche Leeuw*, which may be obtained "everywhere and nowhere," and whose "editorial office is situated in the Kommandantur at Brussels, opposite the printing-press of *La Libre Belgique*" (Plate IV.); *De Vrije Stem*, of Antwerp (Plate V.), etc.

Their organisation is much the same as that of *La Libre Belgique*; we shall return to the subject later.

One word only as to another journal, *Motus, journal des gens occupés*, a satirical sheet which was sold, not gratuitously distributed. Only two or three numbers appeared, for it had the ill-luck to be born just at the time when the German police were increasing the frequency of their visits to newsagents' stalls, and to booksellers' and stationers' shops. Numbers of prohibited publications were seized during these visits, but, despite all the invitations of the German authorities, no newsagent denounced the contributors to or the printers of the forbidden newspapers, pamphlets, picture postcards, photographs, etc. They quietly underwent their months of imprisonment, rather than accept the reduction of the penalty which was offered to them in exchange for a treasonable action. However, the activity of the occupying Power was fatal to *Motus*. It is a pity, for the pleasantries of this journal

were highly amusing. It was *Motus* that informed us that the Crown Prince had just had a son born to him, "un nouveau p(r)ince-monseigneur";[1] it also related that Wilhelm II was growing extremely thin, but that the newspapers across the Rhine which took the liberty of speaking of the Emperor's weight were prosecuted for the crime of "Pèse-majesté."

Here are a few articles borrowed from *La Vérité* and *La Libre Belgique*, which explain better than we could the part played by the prohibited papers, and the manner in which they are circulated in Belgium.

Newspapers from Prussia.

All the daily papers in Brussels, without exception, have ceased publication. From the beginning of the occupation Von der Goltz caused advances to be made to them. These came to nothing. It is not consonant with the dignity of the independent Press to recognise the law of usurpation; it is unpatriotic to enter the service of the enemy. Now, to publish what pleases the Prussian censorship, and to omit what displeases it; not to rejoice in the advantages won by the Allied armies, but to hide them, shuffle them out of sight, and, on the contrary, to insist upon the pretended successes of the enemy troops; to insert articles imposed by the Prussian bureaux, and to reproduce the despatches of the Allies as they emerge from the garbling processes of Berlin; to criticise when Belgium takes the initiative, because it is only the Belgian initiative that the censorship wishes to see belittled; to refrain from pillorying the massacres of Visé, Dolhain, Liége, Aerschot, Diest, Louvain, Dinant, Tamines, Termonde, etc., but to wax indignant over petty abuses laid to the charge of impoverished Belgians; to speak complacently of the enemy's work of organisation, but to

[1] A reference to the father's proclivities as collector of bric-à-brac. A *pince-monseigneur* is a burglar's jemmy.—(*Tr.*)

remain dumb before his exactions: this is to cringe, to trample all pride underfoot, to set an example of feebleness, and to serve the interests of the Germanic aggression.

Journalism of the muzzled variety aggravates its case if it makes a great deal of money. A weak and covetous newspaper finds no readers save among persons devoid of moral dignity.

These domesticated organs are opposed by a Press of a different nature, an emergency Press: this latter repudiates all contact with the enemy, denounces his crimes, and encourages the admirable and unsubduable spirit displayed by the people. Such publications as *La Vérité* or *La Libre Belgique* are not offered for sale, nor do they contain advertisements. On the contrary, money has to be spent on them, and there is no reward to be reaped other than years of imprisonment should one be captured.

Such an organ has at its disposal, to increase its circulation, neither trains nor the motor-cars of the Prussians. This is why our readers are begged with the utmost urgency to employ their own for the purpose, to distribute these pages through the provinces. This is risky work? So much the better! The action is therefore more meritorious. The country is infested with emasculated newspapers. Let copies be made, by hand or mechanical means, of those articles which are thought worthy of distribution. Then the present publication, small but proud, poor but unsubjected, will be able to upset the manœuvres of the agents of Germany, and bring comfort to those who have no other sources of information than Berlin-made placards and censored sheets, in which the despatches are so distorted as to distil, day by day, disillusion and delusion, platitude and despair. In the long run this feebleness and perfidy might depress certain of our compatriots: it is for them that Truth emerges from her well!

(*La Vérité*, No. 1, 2nd May, 1915, p. 1.)

Thanks to all.

We know that articles from *La Vérité*, reproduced on the typewriter, are circulating in the country districts. We

PLATE V.

№ 6 JUNI 1916 PRIJS VAN HET NUMMER NIETS OF MEER Verkrijgbaar NERGENS EN OVERAL

DE VLAAMSCHE LEEUW

Vaderlandsch propagandablad

In deze tijden van rouw en beproeving scharen wij ons Vlamingen zoo veel mogelijk samen met onze Waalsche broeders rond onze BELGISCHE DYNASTIE en deelen met hen, denzelfden nood en dezelfde gevaren

Wij zijn overtuigd dat wanneer de eindegetijd zal behaald zijn wij samen ook dezelfde rechten zullen deelen

Belgiën hoeven duldt geen vreemd e
Duldt geen vreemden dan in 't graf

" De Leeuw van Vlaanderen "

Wee hem den ondergronden die 't wagen en zal verraden
Den Vlaamschen Leeuw komt klauwen en brouwhuis hem staat!

gecensureerd den 15 6 1916

Redactie KOMMANDANTUR Brussel rechtover de Drukkerij van " LA LIBRE BELGIQUE "

Twee jaar Ballingschap in eigen land.

Het werk der Duitsch-Belgische Pers !

—

Het is nu ongeveer twee jaar dat onze Belgische bevolking volkomen van de beschaafde wereld afgesloten leeft

den naam van " Chevaliers de la triste figure " (Ridders van het bedrukt wezen) vinden dat het toch te lang duurt dat de Duitschers toch overal komen waar zij verslingen, dat onze hondgrooten zich tot nu toe toch over geen enkel belangrijk wapenfeit mogen beroemen, enz. En onderstaand zijn verrukking voor de slimme onderwerping der Duitsche soldaten voor hunne overzeesche normen dit " recht " Zij bewonderen het voortreffelijk bestuur van von Bissing en zijn kliek en vinden dat wij Belgen veel bij de Duitschers te leeren hebben In een woord zij toonen zich waardige lezers van La Belgique

UPPER PORTION OF THE FIRST PAGE OF THE FLEMISH NEWSPAPER *De Vlaamsche Leeuw*. (*Reduced.*)

PLATE VI

Nr 2. 1915.

De Vrije Stem

Belgisch orgaan voor de provincie Antwerpen

Verschijnende gedurende de Duitsche Bezetting.

Bureelen en Redactie :
HOTEL DER PATRIOTTEN
Begijnenstraat, 42.

Telegraphisch adres :
Kommandantur-Antwerpen-Mecheln
Met gratie ende privilegie.

Open Brief van Jan Van Rijswijck uit den Hemel.

Dichter Jan Rijswijck (1818†1869) stuurt ons van uit den hemel volgenden Open Brief, met verzoek van opname in « De Vrije Stem. » Wij houden ons verzekerd dat dit schrijven met groote voldoening door ons volk zal gelezen worden.

Den Hemel, 21e Kamer, 3e verdiep.

Aan de Redactie van « De Vrije Stem »
Hotel der Patriotten, Begijnenstraat, 42.

Beste Vaderlanders.

Door tusschenkomst van Jan Olieslagers, die van zijn uitstapken om eenige bommen op de stellingen der Duitschers te gooien, gebruik heeft

UPPER PORTION OF THE FIRST PAGE OF THE FLEMISH NEWSPAPER *De Vrije Stem*. (*Reduced*)

know that readings of these have been organised among friends. May this be continued; may it occur more frequently and become general.

(*La Vérité*, No. 3, 20th May, 1915, p. 13.)

A Little Indulgence, Please!

A few readers have complained of the disagreeable odour possessed by certain of our newspapers; we beg them to excuse us, but they must understand that in time of war one cannot always choose one's travelling companions. Thus *La Libre Belgique* has found itself compelled to travel in company with red herrings, or Herve cheeses, or carbide of calcium. We beg our readers to extend to *La Libre Belgique* the same indulgence which they are forced, for the time being, to extend to certain of their neighbours in the tram-cars. However, the Spring is here, so we shall do our utmost to give *La Libre Belgique* the perfume of the rose or the violet.

The present number is delayed in publication. This is the explanation: we had to reprint it. *La Libre Belgique* encountered the enemy. It threw itself into the water, in order to escape by swimming, and was drowned!

Requiescat in pace!

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 10, March, 1915, p. 1, col. 1.)

Please Hand This On!

Our readers will not have failed to remark our insistent repetition of this advice. As prudence does not permit us to increase the number of copies printed to the extent our friends would wish, on account of the difficulty of introducing packages of too voluminous a nature into the capital, we have, from the outset, relied on the patriotism of our "subscribers" to assist us in our task. Let every copy of our little paper pass from hand to hand. What matter if the owner sees it return to him a trifle soiled, a trifle tattered: what matter if it never returns at all? He will console himself by reminding himself that it has travelled some distance, since it could not find its way back. It will therefore have fulfilled the intention of its editors.

A hundred copies should represent at least a thousand readers.

Now as we print . . . Tut! We must be silent: the Boches must not learn how many!

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 21, May, 1915, p. 1, col. 1.)

Owing to an accident to some machinery our service was rather disorganised last week; we were able to effect only provisional repairs, and if the appearance of the paper was somewhat delayed our readers will kindly excuse us.

Important Notice to Our Readers and Distributors.

The existence of our publication and the liberty of those who are concerned in its production depend, above all, on the discretion of those who receive it and distribute it, Curiosity, even the most benevolent, may be as dangerous and as mischievous as the criminal denunciation which is naturally encouraged by our worst enemies. We therefore URGENTLY beg all true Belgians, to whom alone our paper is dedicated, to respect the anonymity of the contributors to *La Libre Belgique*, and to abstain from the slightest effort to learn their identity. This curiosity might by itself become an act of treachery, and might give rise to the most serious results, the least of which would be the premature decease of *La Libre Belgique*.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 29, June, 1915, p. 1, col. 1.)

Warning to Our Readers.

If they receive a visit from a respectable ecclesiastic who wants to talk about *La Libre Belgique*, the good work accomplished by the paper, etc., they are begged to take this Boche in a cassock politely by the arm, and to turn him out of doors without more ado.

However, those who feel that they ought to embellish this eviction by a good kick in the part vulgarly known as " the

Prussian," are free to do so. The act will be deserved, if not deserving.

THE EDITORS.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 31, June, 1915, p. 1, col. 1.)

To His Excellency Baron von Bissing, German Governor.

EXCELLENCY,

You overwhelm us with attentions. Your agents, public and secret, are multiplying their domiciliary visits in their search for *La Libre Belgique*. You have even mobilised, they say, a special brigade of detectives, who have come from Berlin to discover its editors, contributors, distributors, reporters, etc.

You are wasting your time and squandering your money quite uselessly. It is true that you have already more than once laid hands upon a bundle of copies of the newspaper which is your nightmare, and that you have inflicted heavy fines upon those who were in possession of copies. But *La Libre Belgique* has continued to appear as . . . irregularly as before, and the size of its impressions has not ceased to increase . . . regularly after each of your raids.

You know very well, moreover, your Excellency, that although certain of these raids have terminated more or less gloriously, others have covered your agents and their officers with ridicule. Once again, you are wasting your time, my dear Baron, and the results of your seizures and confiscations will not repay you for the trouble you are giving yourself, nor will it make up for the ridicule of your failure.

The longer you persist, the further will our propaganda spread. Our automobile printing-press, thanks to your well-known obligingness, moves from one point of the country to another with a facility, a freedom, an *essence* [1]—pardon,

[1] There is here a play of words beyond translation. *Essence* means benzine—motor spirit. A German would say *essence* when he meant *aisance*. Possibly there is also a reference to the raids upon *cabinets d'aisances* (water-closets) mentioned on pp. 14–15.—(*Tr.*)

I mean an *aisance* (that comes of frequenting the Kommandantur, one picks up the accent) — an *aisance* which you do not suspect.

You should remember, dear Sir, that *La Libre Belgique* pledged itself, from the moment of its birth, to appear in spite of everything, so long as our dear country is occupied by your compatriots, so long as it is necessary to react against the Press which is in your pay, and that which, by its lies or its omissions, is seeking to enfeeble our patriotism, to wear down our resistance, to enervate our characters, to sow doubt, division and despair in our ranks, in a word, to render vain and useless our sacrifices and our sufferings.

You forget that in Belgium a promise is a sacred engagement, which binds him who has made it as firmly as an oath, and more firmly than a diplomatic treaty. You make the great mistake of regarding us as annexed. You may rob us, imprison us, shoot us even, but you will not silence us.

WE ARE NOT GERMANS—SO DO NOT MEASURE US WITH YOUR ELL.

You have recently remarked, or so we have been informed, that the Belgians are intractable.[1] This word, which is too reminiscent of the souvenirs which your officers have everywhere left behind them in our houses and our chateaux, should have scorched your lips; but it is, none the less, the unfortunate expression of a true idea: the Belgians are INDOMITABLE.

As for killing *La Libre Belgique*, do not count upon it; it is impossible. It is unseizable, because it is nowhere. It is a will-o'-the-wisp, which issues from the graves of those whom your countrymen massacred in Louvain, Tamines, and Dinant, and which is pursuing you. But it is also the will-o'-the wisp which issues from the graves of the German soldiers who fell at Liége, at Walhaem, on the Yser. These

[1] *Indécrottable* means uncleanable, unpolishable, rude, incorrigible, unteachable, intractable. *Crotter* means to dirty, to befoul; *crottin* is dung. The play of words, which is untranslatable, refers to the peculiar stercoral relics deposited by German officers in houses which have given them shelter.—(*Tr.*)

latter now perceive for what a wretched scheme of domination they were sacrificed to the Moloch of war, under the pretext of defending the Fatherland; finally, it is the voice of all the mothers, the voice of all the widows and orphans who are mourning those they have lost. This voice is daily gaining power; its echoes are heard over all our provinces and reach beyond our frontiers. It will be silent only when the last of your soldiers and your policemen have ceased to oppress our invaded soil in defiance of all justice.

Do not believe, my dear Baron, that we are so simple as to believe that you will take our advice and abandon the hope that your shady[1] Sherlock Holmeses will discover us. We know that nothing stops a German once he has entered upon an evil course—neither a sense of the ridiculous, nor any scruple, nor the consciousness of final defeat. This, Excellency, is why, in respect of your past, present, and future miscalculations, we approach you with the expression of our very sincere and entirely disrespectful condolences.

LA LIBRE BELGIQUE.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 49, October, 1915, p. 1, col. 1.)

* * * * *

In the incessant conflict which the Belgians, prisoners in their own country, are sustaining against the German domination, the newspapers are supported by numerous pamphlets. Let us mention a few of these, simply to give some idea of their diversity.

Nécrologe dinantais, August, 1914.—This pamphlet contains, first of all, an account of the massacres and the incendiarism; then the "Official List of the Civilians shot at Dinant on the 23rd and 24th of August, 1914, by order of the German military authority,

[1] Another play on words in the original. *Sherlock Holmes de contrebande* might mean "Sherlock Holmeses for the detection of smuggled goods," or Sherlock Holmeses who were also "black sheep."—(*Tr.*)

without any previous trial." The list contains the names of 606 dead, with their professions, their places of residence, and their ages. Then it continues: "This list is incomplete; it does not contain the names of all those whose bodies could not be identified, or who died in the hospitals as a result of their wounds."

The *Nécrologe dinantais* was preceded by another printed list, which was implacably hunted down by the Germans in Dinant itself.[1]

Pages du Livre des Douleurs de la Belgique.—Objective narratives by eye-witnesses of some of the horrors committed in Belgium by the German Army.

La Violation de la Neutralité belge.—A very simple account of the German perfidy, published in January 1915.

Comment l'Yser n'a pas été franchi : Yser, Nieuport, Inondations.—Maps and photographs of the district; accounts of the battles and floods.

Le Manifeste des intellectuels allemands et les Réponses des neutres.—A French translation of the Manifesto, and some of the replies to it.

La Sozialdemokratie et la Guerre. Le Crime des Socialistes allemands. Petit dossier documentaire.—This contains, in particular, an account of the visits paid to the Brussels Maison du Peuple by various German militants: Wendel, Liebknecht, Köster and Noske.

La Franc-Maçonnerie belge et les Loges allemandes.—A reproduction of M. Charles Magnette's appeal to the nine German lodges, asking for an impartial inquiry into what had happened in Belgium; the refusal of

[1] See Davignon, *Belgique et Allemagne*, p. 66.

the only two lodges which replied; M. Magnette's reply; and documentary evidence of German origin.

Patriotisme et Endurance.—This is Mgr. Mercier's well-known Pastoral Letter, which produced so great an impression. The original edition, printed by Dessain at Malines, was in part seized by the German authorities. But a dozen editions were printed in French, and three in Flemish; it was also distributed by means of typewriting. Numerous impressions were made of each edition. At the establishment of a single printer in Brussels the German police confiscated 35,000 pamphlets. But so many hundreds of thousands of copies were printed that every house in Belgium contains at least one copy.

Autour de la Lettre cardinalice—A reproduction of the principal correspondence exchanged between the German authorities and the Belgian clergy in connection with the proscription of the pastoral letter.

* * * * *

The anti-German propaganda is also being carried on by means of picture postcards, representing the King, the Queen, Prince Léopold, M. Max, Mgr. Mercier, Miss Cavell and Ph. Baucq, etc.

The prohibited postcard which must have annoyed the Germans most profoundly is that which reproduces the portraits of their spies. Thirty of these gentry had the brilliant idea of getting photographed in a body. A week had not elapsed before the Belgians had obtained possession of a print and had reproduced it as a picture postcard. Directly one of these congenial informers entered a tram everybody stared at him with significant insistence.

Although the taking of photographs is prohibited, many amateurs brave the rigours of German "justice" and take photographs of the ruins of Louvain, Dinant, Termonde, Visé, the villages of Luxemburg, etc.

4. German Regulations Affecting the Press

On the one hand are the Germans, the wielders of authority, determined to abuse it without the slightest scruple, seeking only to demoralise us in order to crush us more readily under their heel; on the other hand are the Belgians, abandoned to their own resources, exposed to all the severities of the courts-martial whenever they make an effort to escape from under the extinguisher. In this struggle, so unequal that the Belgians seem conquered beforehand, it is nevertheless the Belgians who are uppermost; and nothing proves the victory of our countrymen, and the impotent rage of our enemies, than the more and more excessive penalties threatened by the decrees relating to the Press.

A warning published by the military government of Brussels, on the 22nd of November, 1914, spoke of long terms of imprisonment.

Notice.

I remind the population of Brussels and the suburbs that it is strictly forbidden to sell or distribute newspapers which are not expressly authorised by the German military governor. Contraventions involve immediate arrest of the vendors and the infliction of long terms of imprisonment.

Brussels, the 22nd September, 1914.

The Military Governor,
Baron von Luttwitz.
(General.)

The decree of the 13th of October, 1914, signed by Baron von der Goltz, threatened with a punishment "conformable with the martial law, the distributors of non-censored writings."

A notice dated the 9th of November, 1914, also signed by Baron von der Goltz, stated that offenders would be "punished by long terms of imprisonment."

Sentences were actually passed at this period; for example, Louis Prost was condemned to six months' imprisonment "for having distributed copies of untruthful news of the war, reproduced by typewriting."

But the severities of the Germans did not prevent the introduction of foreign newspapers, nor the creation of clandestine journals. In an official *communiqué*, reproduced by the censored journals, dated the 14th of June, 1915, Herr Baron von Bissing, Governor-General in Belgium, complained of this situation.

A few days later a fresh *communiqué* entered into details: offenders would be punished with imprisonment varying in duration from one day to three years, and would be condemned to pay a maximum fine of 3,000 marks.

A decree of the Governor's, dated the 25th of June, 1915, states:

The actions and omissions prohibited by the decree of the 13th October, 1914, and the Notice of the 4th November, 1914, concerning the censorship of printed matter, recitations, etc., and the Notice dated the 15th November, 1914, concerning the carrying of letters, writings, etc., are punishable by imprisonment varying in duration from one day to three years and a maximum fine of 3,000 marks, or by one of these penalties to the exclusion of the other, unless other laws or decrees prescribe an increased penalty.

Attempts to commit the above-mentioned actions and

omissions are punishable; the objects concealed from the censorship will be confiscated.

Infractions will be tried by the courts-martial, or, in the case of contraventions not of a very serious nature, by the military authorities.

The present order will come into force on the day of publication.

(*L'Écho de la Presse internationale*, 5th July, 1915.)

But no threat affects the patriotism of the Belgians. Thus it was that the Governor-General gave vent to fresh lamentations in January, 1916. In these he admitted—at last!—that the people of Brussels were still implacably hostile to the occupying forces. This little fit of sincerity clashes with the interviews which he granted, early in 1915, to the German newspapers, notably to the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*; in these he invariably stated that the relations between the people of Brussels and the Germans had improved. Here is his lament of January, 1916:

The attitude of the population of Brussels towards the German garrison betrays, in every walk of life, an unjustified hostility. Not only are insulting writings continually and eagerly distributed and purchased in the city, writings of an obscene character attacking the German Administration—and this under the eyes of the city police; not only have German officers been insulted in the open street (as, for example, in the case of Joseph), but the population of Brussels has often contrived to lend active assistance to the enemy's intelligence department, furnishing it with information as to the military situation in the city, for example, or the temporary occupation of the aeroplane hangars, and has thus rendered possible hostile actions against the German garrison established within its walls. It is regrettable that even the communal employees have not been ashamed to participate in these hostile actions, and to assist in their accomplishment,

as spies, or by concealing explosives. Further, in spite of the repeated warnings, with the threat of severe penalties, issued by the general Government, the population of Brussels has kept weapons in concealment, and this on a large scale, and has thus indicated its intention of keeping itself armed in view of a rising.

Similarly, in the matter of billets the hostile attitude of the people of Brussels has been openly displayed. Not only have all sorts of difficulties been created for German officers and employees, in the matter of letting suitable apartments, but the few lessors who, to gain a legitimate living, have let apartments to German officers or employees, have been subjected, by their fellow citizens, to continual persecution, threats, and humiliations. In this way the question of finding lodgings has become, for German officers and employees, particularly embarrassing.

(*Signed*) VON BISSING.

A few days later, on the 11th of January, 1916, there came a threatening confirmation of the Governor-General's complaints :

It is Decreed.

ART. 2.—(*a*) Whosoever, in the territory of the general Government, shall have published or consciously caused to circulate false reports as to the number, the advance, or the pretended victories of the enemy forces, which might lead the civil or military authorities astray as to the measures to be taken by them will be punished by a term of imprisonment of not more than five years' duration, unless the laws and regulations in force prescribe the application of a longer term of imprisonment.

ART. 3.—Infractions of the present decree are within the competence of the German military tribunals.

Brussels, 11th January, 1916.

VON BISSING.
VON SAUBERZWEIG.

So far only those who busied themselves in distributing "provocative writings" were exposed to the severities of the military courts. From the 5th of February, 1916, it was equally criminal to receive or retain them.

Those who found *La Libre Belgique* in their letter-boxes were therefore bound to burn it immediately!

It is Decreed.

Whosoever possesses printed matter which, contrary to the regulation in force, has not been subjected to examination by the censorship, will be punished either by a term of imprisonment not exceeding three years in duration, and a fine which may amount to 3,000 marks, or one of these penalties to the exclusion of the other, unless circumstances prove that the possessor is not guilty.

The printed matter constituting the object of the infractions will be confiscated.

These infractions are within the competence of the German military authorities or tribunals.

Brussels, 5th February, 1916.

No doubt it was in pursuance of this decree that the proprietor of a café in Liége was sentenced:

LIEGE.—M. Adam Quaden, the proprietor of the Taverne Britannique, Place Verte, has just been sentenced by the Boche courts to four months' imprisonment for the following reason:

The Taverne Britannique, a meeting-place for all true citizens of Liége, was visited one day by some Germans, who proceeded to make a minute search. In the porter's lodge were discovered a few numbers of *La Libre Belgique*, which the porter remembered having picked up from a table where an unknown person had placed them.[1]

[1] One may ask who was this unknown person? Was he perhaps an *agent provocateur*? Do not forget that in Liége

M. Quaden was arrested as responsible, although innocent, and was sentenced.

(*Le Courrier de l'Armeé*, No. 243, 30th March, 1916, p. 4, col. 1.)

Later, in June, 1916, M. Préherbu, justice of peace at Schaerbeck, was suspended from the performance of his functions, having been found in possession of a copy of the detested newspaper.

Two remarks on the subject of these arrests: (*a*) In the domain, essentially civil, of Press offences, only the military authorities or the military tribunals are competent and pass sentences "conformably with the martial law";[1] which means that the trials are not conducted in public, and there is no appeal against the decisions of the courts. What of "the respect for the laws in force in the occupied country" required by Article 43 of the Appendix to The Hague Convention, that "scrap of paper" which is partly the work of German jurists, and which bears their signature?

(*b*) Each new decree threatens heavier penalties. How singular is the German psychology! Evidently they believe that the Belgians, who were not intimidated by six months' imprisonment, would shrink from five years! One may compare with this the reward of £200, then of £1,000, and finally of £3,000, which is said to have been offered for the betrayal of the authors of *La Libre Belgique*.

itself, in December, 1914, numbers of persons were sentenced because German informers had placed the Maestricht *Courrier de la Meuse* in their letter-boxes.

[1] We need not be surprised that the military courts should try Press offences; in Antwerp restaurant-keepers guilty of serving their customers with peeled potatoes are arraigned before the military tribunals!

In the country districts the same measures were taken against uncensored writings. It will suffice to refer to a few decrees already published in *Comment les Belges résistent*, at Spa (p. 6), Louvain (p. 7), Namur (p. 8), and Antwerp (p. 17).

We cannot resist the temptation to reproduce in these pages the delightful placard which was posted up in Liége, on the 10th of September, 1915, when the Battle of the Marne was at its height :

To the Population of Liége and District.

In view of the increasing successes of the German troops, it is impossible to understand how the people of Liége can be still sufficiently credulous to believe the absurd and frivolous news propagated by the manufactories of lies installed in Liége. Those who occupy themselves in propagating such news expose themselves to rigorous punishment. They are playing a dangerous game in abusing the credulity of their fellow-citizens and urging them to thoughtless acts. The reasonable population of Liége will of its own accord oppose all attempts of this nature.

Otherwise it runs the risk not only of the most serious disappointment, but also of becoming ridiculous in the eyes of intelligent people.

VON KOLEWE.
Lieutenant-General and
German Governor of the Fortress of Liége.

It is forbidden to remove this placard or to post another over it.

5. THE AERIAL SUPPLEMENT OF *La Libre Belgique.*

Since the spring of 1916 the Belgians have been utilizing a new means of transport in the distribution of prohibited publications : the aeroplane.

Small " flying " leaflets (*Le Clarion du Roi, sup-*

plément aérien de La Libre Belgique) are printed abroad and dropped upon the Belgian towns by our aviators. They give, month by month, in French and in Flemish, news of the war. Needless to say, the Germans do their very utmost to prevent our compatriots from picking up and handing on these *communiqués*. Thus the aeroplane which flew over the Antwerp and Saint-Nicolas region at the end of June, 1916, scattered quantities of small leaflets; and for days German cavalry patrols were scouring the countryside, arresting and searching all those who could be suspected of carrying the news which had fallen from the skies.

On Wednesday the 6th of September, 1916, Lieutenant C—— and Adjutant M—— shed a beneficent rain of aerial supplements of *La Libre Belgique* upon the strollers at the Porte de Namur and in the Grand Place, Brussels.

As a result of this visit the inhabitants of the boulevards near the Porte de Namur were punished; they had to be within doors by 8.30 p.m., and remain in their own homes, without light. As this prospect might not have been disagreeable enough to prevent the people of Brussels from picking up the papers distributed by aviators, the Germans hit on a more radical system. They fired at the aeroplane shrapnel which did not burst in the air, but on falling, close to the ground. Numbers of curious persons were killed and wounded in this way at the time of the raid of the 27th September, 1916.

6. Counterfeit Prohibited Newspapers

Perceiving that neither brutal intimidation nor corruption was preventing our countrymen from

purchasing foreign newspapers and distributing the products of the clandestine Press, the German authorities employed our own weapon: they printed imitations of prohibited newspapers.

As early as January, 1915, a pamphlet was circulated in Brussels which spoke in an insulting manner of the civil authorities of Antwerp in connection with the entrance of the German troops into that city. This affair has not as yet been thoroughly cleared up; the complicity of the Germans has not been actually proved; but at all events the Germans have admitted, through the medium of Baron von Bissing, junior, Professor in the University of Munich, that they have done their utmost to profit by the dissensions which they have attempted to sow.[1]

At the end of July, 1915, a "Proclamation of King Albert on the occasion of the National Festival of the 21st July" was on sale in Brussels. This was a tissue of ineptitudes mingled with venomous attacks upon the Allies. The pseudo-proclamation was reprinted by the German Press. The fraud was so clumsy that we had no need of the notice in No. 42 of *La Libre Belgique* in order to see daylight.

Their finest invention was the publication of a newspaper, *Le Fouet*, which was distributed secretly. In addition to feeble jests about "Beastman (*Bête-man*, German pun on Bethmann), the Chandelier of the Empire," No. 1 contained a violent attack upon the "clerical Government" of Belgium and the

[1] See *Belgien unter deutscher Verwaltung*, in the *Suddeutsche Monatshefte*, April, 1915 (p. 31 of the Supplement), and "Belgians under the German Eagle," p. 238.

"flamingants." This was an unmistakable trade-mark, for there is not a single Belgian who has not to-day forgotten our intestine quarrels.

On several occasions counterfeits of foreign newspapers have been sold in Brussels; either of Dunkirk newspapers, or of newspapers published in Holland by Belgians. These imitations were sold at 30 centimes to 1 franc, whereas the genuine publications cost at least twice as much. They exhibited this peculiarity —that they announced astounding victories won by the Allies. Were they the work of some printer eager to make money, or did the Germans have a hand in them? It is difficult to say. At the same time, let us remember that during the siege of Paris, Bismarck took pains to ensure that fabricated newspapers should from time to time reach the Parisians, containing accounts of pretended French victories; for he knew that nothing more surely leads a population to despair than the destruction of illusions.

B. AUTHORISED PUBLICATIONS

We have just shown what efforts the Belgians make to publish the truth despite all obstacles. Let us now describe the manner in which the German authorities keep our populations informed of the news.

The documents placed at our disposal may be divided into four groups:

1. The gratuitous information provided by the German authority and by private individuals.
2. Printed matter of German origin which may be bought in Belgium.

3. Newspapers and pamphlets, supposedly Belgian, which are submitted to the censorship.

4. Dutch newspapers tolerated by the censorship.

1. Gratuitous Information

In the first place there are the official announcements. These, in the first place, were worded in German, French, and Flemish, but since October, 1914, they have been worded in German, Flemish and French. They are supposed to keep us informed of the military operations. Here is an article from *La Vérité*, which leaves us in no doubt as to their sincerity.

The Arsenal of Untruth.

It is truly criminal to deceive the Belgian population by spreading false news.

The Governor-General.

In the whole of the German military machine, which the Allies are demolishing piece by piece, the portion which still works best is the arsenal of untruth established in Berlin, with a branch in Vienna.

Do you wish to discover the secrets of their system of "faked" information? Pass along the Rue de la Chancellerie near Saint-Gudule, in Brussels, or the Rue des Paroissiens, at a few paces' distance. It is in my quarter of the city; every day I note an old placard which was posted on the 15th of September, and which expresses itself in these terms: "Berlin, 14th September (*Official*).—In the western theatre of the war (France) operations have taken place the details of which cannot as yet be made public, and which led to a battle which has gone in our favour. All the news relating to this subject published by all sorts of means by the enemy, and representing the situation as unfavourable to us, is false." Now this battle, which commenced two days earlier,

was the great French victory of the Marne which finally arrested the invasion.[1] Berlin knew the truth then, and published a lie! Whenever a victorious despatch comes from Berlin, let us remember the official despatch of the 14th of September, in which there are as many falsehoods as words, and in which the opposite side is accused of spreading falsehoods! The whole German method is there!

Another example: If we refer to the news which the enemy was publishing in the second half of October, the Belgian Army, decimated, dismembered, was in the act of re-forming itself in the north of France. Now, the Belgians were then accomplishing wonderful exploits, between Nieuport and Dixmude: they were occupying the Yser; face to face with an army superior in men and guns, fighting day and night, they inflicted a decisive defeat upon the Barbarians! We shall later on relate an episode of this action. Well! it was months before the truth was known about these glorious days of our campaign, for the lies of Berlin contrived to conceal from us their brilliant refulgence.

This is not all. Recently a German placard informed us of the destruction of an Italian dirigible. But neither the placard nor the Brussels newspapers of Prussian origin breathed a word of the destruction of two Zeppelins, one at Evere-lez-Bruxelles, the other at Saint-Amand-lez-Gand, losses suffered three days earlier.

On the 10th of June Berlin admitted that the German troops had "abandoned" (hum!) the last houses of Neuville, "which has been in the possession of the French since the 9th of May." Now this victory had been accomplished a full month before, but Berlin had until then omitted to inform us of it. On the other hand, Berlin had not ceased to assure us that the offensive north of Arras was obtaining no success.

Here are a few typical examples of the method of informa-

[1] This defeat, which the Germans never reported, cost them, in addition to their dead and wounded, 65,000 prisoners, 345 guns, and more than 3,000 vehicles, with 5,000 horses. The battle lasted from the 6th to the 12th of September. It was fought by 1,500,000 Germans, and 1,250,000 French, reinforced by 60,000 English.

tion followed in Berlin: (1) A great French victory is denied, the French being accused of falsifying the real facts; (2) the Belgian Army is declared non-existent at the very moment when it is offering an unconquerable resistance; (3) facts unfavourable to the Germans, of which thousands of Belgians are the delighted witnesses, are passed over in silence; (4) it takes the Germans a month to admit a check, after first attributing it to the enemy. . . .

There is a "Bureau for the Diffusion of German News Abroad," which is situated in Dusseldorf. It has established in this country offices where all may read the style of the laboratory: *Buro zur Verbzeitung von deutschen Nachrichten im Auslande.* With such an organisation—and the official Wolff Agency—not forgetting the subservient Press—we are stuffed with lies and propagandist paragraphs. . . .

The fellow-citizens of Manneken-Pis spit upon these filthy tricks—and all Belgium does the same.

(*La Verité*, No. 6, p. 1, 21st June, 1915.)

The accounts of the battles in Champagne, in February, 1915, were of the same quality, as will be seen from the following extract from an article in *La Libre Belgique*.

German Lies.

On large blue placards, posted on the walls of the city, and relating to the battles which have been fought in Champagne, the Germans particularly emphasised the statement that two weak divisions of Rhinelanders fought against six French army corps. Now, this is what we learn from the French official *communiqué*: "The military operations in Champagne have resulted, since the 16th of February, in enabling us to advance to a depth of 2½ kilometres over a front of 7 kilometres."

"The enemy employed *four to five and a half army corps.* Ten thousand corpses were found on the field of battle, and we made two thousand prisoners."

According to this *communiqué*, the two weak divisions!!

. . . of Rhinelanders were composed of 119 battalions, thirty-one squadrons, sixty-four field batteries, and twenty heavy batteries. Up to the 3rd of March the Germans had further brought up twenty battalions, among them six battalions of the Guard, one of field artillery, and two heavy batteries.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 9, March, 1915, p. 4, col. 1.)

The official German news attained the summit of veracity at the time of the attacks delivered in October and November, 1914, in the region of Ypres. *La Soupe* indulged itself in the pleasure of copying the German placards *verbatim* and publishing them.

These official placards are not content with overwhelming us with authentic news as to the military operations. They are also careful to inform us of public opinion abroad. That these newspaper cuttings are sincere it is hardly necessary to say. Let us give a single example, that of the very first placard which is of direct interest to us.

Up to the 13th of September, 1914, the placards posted in Brussels had merely summarised articles in the newspapers relating to France and England. On the 14th of September we were enabled to peruse two extracts relating to our own country:

News Published by the German Government.

Cologne, *12th September.*

The *Kölnische Zeitung* having, in its issue of Tuesday, reprinted an article from the *Corriere della Sera*, according to which the Belgian Cardinal Mercier is stated to have expressed an unfavourable opinion of the Germans, describing them as barbarians, Cardinal von Hartmann, Archbishop of Cologne, writes to the *Kölnische Zeitung* as follows:

"I hasten to inform you, with reference to the article

bearing the title 'Cardinal Mercier as Accuser,' No. 1011 of the *Kölnische Zeitung*) that during his recent stay in Rome he was interviewed by the correspondent of the *Corriere della Sera*. When this interview appeared in the newspaper the Cardinal immediately denied, in the most energetic fashion, that he had expressed himself as the *Corriere* pretends. Moreover, he immediately sent to the Prussian Minister at the Vatican, and also to the Abt. von Stotzingen, through me, a protest which was to be published in the *Osservatore Romano*.

"I shall be greatly obliged to you, Sir, if you will be so good, in the interest of the truth, as to publish this declaration in the *Kölnische Zeitung*."

Frankfort, 12*th September*.

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* learns from Stockholm: The truth as to Louvain is beginning to find its way even into England. In the *Westminster Gazette*, an ex-member of Parliament writes: "When the population of the city suddenly fired from the houses on the German troops, this act of madness was bound to involve the just consequences. Field-Marshal Lord Roberts caused the farms of the Boers to be burned for similar actions."

The German Military Government.

Let us first of all consider the extract dated from Cologne, which states that Mgr. Mercier granted an interview to a writer on the staff of the *Corriere della Sera*. This is false; it was not with a contributor to the *Corriere della Sera*, which is a journal of Liberal tendencies, that Mgr. Mercier had an interview while in Rome, but with a contributor to the *Corriere d'Italia*, which is frankly Catholic.

The second extract is even more ingeniously garbled. An ex-Member of Parliament (English) is said to have asserted that the population of Louvain fired on the German troops. Now this gentleman is simply repeating—as he himself expressly declares—the German

assertions. The only thing which he himself remarks is that German troops were defeated near Malines and that they fled toward Louvain.

Here is the original article from the *Westminster Gazette.* It will be seen that the first part repeats a nonsensical tale about a pretended menace of aggression on the part of the people of Brussels. We, who did not leave Brussels for a moment during the months of August and September, 1914, can certify the fact that there is not a glimmer of truth in this story. However, false or true, it does not affect the deliberate falsification by the German censorship of the only passage which is summarised in the placard. Let us add that the Germans did not breathe a word about the first part of the article; so well did they realise that they would cover themselves with ridicule by repeating such a story to the people of Brussels:

The Truth about Louvain.

To the Editor of the *Westminster Gazette.*

SIR,—In all British fairness some prominence might be given to the very narrow escape Brussels had from the terrible fate of Louvain, as described in the *Daily Telegraph* by its capable correspondent, Mr. Gerald Morgan. He stated that, "accompanied by Richard Harding Davis," he was "permitted by the Germans to follow" this Army. A battle near Waterloo was expected, but it did not come off. Mr. Morgan and his friend returned to Brussels and—I quote his exact words, as given in the *Pall Mall Gazette*—he "found the town on the verge of a turmoil. This was owing to General von Jarodzky's stupidity, and very nearly involved the town in the same fate which afterwards overwhelmed Louvain. He was left in the city with 5,000 men. He moved 3,000 of these suddenly outside the city, and then as suddenly became alarmed for the safety of the remainder among so

large a hostile population. He therefore marched the 3,000 camped outside hastily back again. It was reported that the Germans had been completely defeated at Waterloo and were fleeing in confusion. The inhabitants of Brussels wished to take up arms and finish off Jarodzky and any survivors, but fortunately the error was discovered in time."

Now, this is exactly what the German generals declare to have happened at Louvain. We know as a certainty that a small German force was actually defeated outside Malines, and actually fled into Louvain on the very evening it was burned and devastated. The Germans allege that the townsfolk immediately started " to finish off the survivors," firing from the windows and house-tops. This insane act would rouse the devil in any soldiery, and may explain how, after a twenty-four hours' struggle, the unhappy town was a heap of ruins. Lord Roberts, the justest and gentlest of conquerors, most properly ordered widespread farm-burning in South Africa for the same offence. If you shoot without blame a soldier who tries to shoot you from in front, should you do less to an armed civilian who shoots you in the back ?

Yours, etc.,

A LIBERAL EX-M.P.

(*Westminster Gazette*, 5th September, 1914.)

One sees immediately that the whole interest of the German placard disappears if the first word of the quotation is incorrect : " *When* the population of the city. . . ."

Now leaflet 3 of the *Bureau des deutschen Handelstages*, Berlin, received by a number of commercial houses in Brussels (see p. 57) also reproduces the extract from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, but instead of reading " When the population of the city " . . . the propagandist leaflet reads : " *If* the population of Louvain . . ." Neither quotation accords with the English text, which states, " The Germans allege that the townsfolk . . ." etc.

Generally speaking, the untruthfulness of the German placards is not demonstrated, in Belgium, until long after their publication. But another of their qualities —their foolishness—strikes the Belgian reader immediately.

Here, for example, is a copy of a placard which the people of Brussels read with amusement on the 11th of September, 1914:

News Published by the German Government.

Berlin, *6th September.*

The Austro-Hungarian Embassy publishes the following telegram which was forwarded by the Foreign Office in Vienna:

"The Russian account of the battle of Lemberg and the triumphant capture of that city is a lie. The open town of Lemberg has been abandoned by us, without fighting, for strategical and humanitarian motives."

Berlin, *8th September.*

The Prince Imperial, who was latterly in command of a division of the Guard, with the rank of Colonel, has been promoted by the Emperor to the rank of Lieutenant-General.

London, *8th September.*
(*Reuter's Agency.*)

A German squadron, consisting of two cruisers and four torpedo-boats, has captured fifteen English fishing-vessels in the North Sea, and has taken numerous prisoners to Wilhelmshaven.

The Times announces that the German cruiser *Dresden* has sunk a British collier off the Brazilian coast. Further, two British merchant vessels are reported to have struck mines.

According to information received from Vienna, two British cruisers, seriously damaged, are in harbour at Alexandria; both display plentiful marks of having been under fire.

Rome, *8th September.*

Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Malines, who has been here, left for Belgium with a safe-conduct, passing through the German troops. This protection was obtained for the Cardinal by the Prussian Minister at the Vatican. News to the contrary published by the French, English, and Belgian Press is therefore contrary to the truth.

Breslau, *9th September.*

The commandant-general of the Breslau Army Corps announces:

"The Silesian *landwehr* yesterday fought a victorious battle against the Imperial Guard of the 3rd Caucasian Army Corps; we took 17 officers and 1,000 men prisoners.

Vienna, *9th September.*
(*Official communiqué.*)

We learn, in connection with the recent battles already described as having been fought by the Austrian (Dankl) Army, against which the enemy (the Russians) had brought up considerable reinforcements by railway, that the army commanded by Lieutenant-Field-Marshal Kestranck has repulsed a strong Russian attack with sanguinary losses. On this occasion 600 further prisoners were taken. Apart from this, comparative quiet prevailed yesterday in the Russo-Austrian theatre of the war.

The German Military Government.

The "humanitarian motives" of the Austrian Army, which found such eloquent expression in Serbia, and the activity of the German squadron, which "captured fifteen fishing-vessels," are matters that give one food for meditation. It is even pleasanter to learn that "in spite of statements to the contrary published by the French, English, and Belgian Press," Cardinal Mercier has returned from Rome "passing through the German troops." As if we had not all read the text,

secretly printed and distributed, of the sermon which the Cardinal preached at Havre during this return journey! Yet Havre is not on the way from Rome to Malines if one "passes through the German troops."

Lastly, it is amusing to see that this placard does not breathe a word of the Battle of the Marne, whose vicissitudes were known to us, thanks to the French newspapers smuggled into the country.

As much for what it tells as for what it conceals, this placard is a good example of the statements with which the German authorities placard our walls. What opinion can the rulers of Germany have of the intelligence of their own citizens, if they think they can lead us astray by such ineptitudes?

When these placards are not merely foolish it is, as a rule, because they are impudent; as that in which Hindenburg declares that "the more cruelly the war is conducted the less cruel will it be in reality, because it will be over the sooner" (20th November, 1914), or that in which Mr. Fox states that he has not remarked any "needless cruelty" (26th April, 1915):

Phew!!!

We must do the Germans this justice—that certain of them are beginning to feel ashamed of the atrocities committed by the army of "Kultur." They give themselves incredible trouble to deny them or excuse them. They are annoyed to see that all the world, save their Allies, the butchers of the Armenians, is placing them outside the pale of society. What? A "Kultur" so enviable, so highly vaunted, so superior, to produce such fruits! No, no!—one must not weary of lying and contradicting! All the evidence tending to exculpate the Germans, however daring it may be, must be carefully collected and published. Here is what the Freiherr von Bissing, Governor-General of Belgium, who is nevertheless

familiar with the cruelties of *Gott mit Uns*, has lately had the impudence to have posted on the walls of our capital:

"A certain Edward Fox, an American journalist, a sincere man (extremely so!) who has covered the battle-fronts, East and West, was unable, in spite of his thorough investigations, to discover a single act of useless cruelty committed by the Germans."

This worthy man may boast that he is a reporter of the very highest rank! On the other hand, he asserts that the Russians have assassinated, violated and burned on every hand, in a fashion impossible to describe. What? A man who has such good eyes where the Russians are concerned is blind as a mole when the Germans are in question? By what miracle of optical illusion have we Belgians managed to believe that our cities have been burned, our farms destroyed, our wives, our daughters, our holy women violated, and our houses pillaged? No doubt we have seen awry, for this Fox, a sharp-sighted animal, has noticed nothing of the sort! Let Freiherr von Bissing post up his lying placards in Germany and the neutral countries; it may be he will there find someone to believe him; but here, in Belgium, in Visé, Dinant, Andenne, Battice, Tamines, Termonde, Aerschot, Louvain, and many another place, witnesses of the crimes of *Kultur*! Come, come!

The Freiherr is aware of this. Knowing well that he cannot persuade us to believe him, he adds, as a qualification, to the word "cruelties," the word "useless." So these are *useful* cruelties. To his mind this word saves the day. Do you complain of atrocities? My dear Sir, they were useful. The *Gott mit Uns* have assassinated men, women, and inoffensive old men: these were *useful cruelties*. They have violated women and young girls. *Useful* cruelties! They have seized innocent civilians, have brutally led them into captivity, where they have been inhumanly treated: *useful cruelties*!

What would you say, Herr Baron von Bissing, if, in 1916, our soldiers were to bear the torch through Germany? Would you call these reprisals "useful cruelties?"

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 21, May, 1915, p. 4, col. 1.)

Other placards are doubly instructive, inasmuch as they reveal the existence of books whose importation is prohibited. We then hasten to procure them surreptitiously. Thus, that of the 21st June, 1915, announced the appearance of the book, *La Guerre allemande et le Catholicisme*:

News Published by the General German Government.

Cologne, *21st June.*

The *Kölnische Volkszeitung* has received the following: The German Cardinals von Bettinger (Munich), and von Hartmann (Cologne) have addressed the following telegram to the Emperor: "Revolted by the defamation of which the German Fatherland and its glorious army are the object in the book: *La Guerre allemande et le Catholicisme*, we feel obliged to express to Your Majesty the painful indignation of the entire German episcopate. We shall not fail to address a complaint to the Sovereign Pontiff." The Archbishop of Cologne has received the following reply: "I thank you heartily, you and Cardinal Bettinger, for the feelings of indignation which you have expressed to me in the name of the German Episcopate on the subject of the shameful calumnies which certain writers are propagating concerning the German army and people. These attacks also will shatter themselves against the moral strength and the clear conscience of the German people defending the just cause, and return upon their authors."

The General Government in Belgium.

La Libre Belgique commented upon this placard thus:

A Book.

A book has appeared, entitled *La Guerre allemande et le Catholicisme.*

We knew nothing of it.

We learned of it on facing the wall—you know the wall, every-

one has his own wall in his own neighbourhood—on which the military Government, which is really too kind, pastes every morning news which is skilfully doctored with the sole object of amazing, first of all the Germans, then the Flemings, and finally the Walloons.

Well, then, a book has appeared, which has made two German Cardinals fly into a rage, and the Kaiser into the bargain.

I would have given a good deal to have that book. The libraries, too, would like it, but they have not got it, for we are living under the delightful rule of an incomparable liberty.

Well, who knows! Perhaps this elderly Excellency von Bissing is thinking of placing it on sale, this book which has troubled Munich, Cologne and Berlin. Our Governor is installing, evidently at his own expense, at every cross-roads, in every corner, in all the squares of Brussels, kiosks of an elegance wholly Teutonic, wherein are displayed caricatures of colossal wit, Austro-Gothic newspapers, little books, and picture postcards for the use of a special public which has plenty of *kultur* and not many marks.

We shall wait, then, until the famous book reaches us by the hierarchical route; for everybody knows that we cannot obtain either pamphlets or newspapers, not even *Ma Jeanette*. We have the Germans, and that ought to be enough for us.

But this book! This book!

What can it have said to upset Cardinals von Bettinger and von Hartmann, who hastened to telegraph to this most Lutheran Majesty that the volume overwhelmed them with grief, and that they were going to complain to the Sovereign Pontiff?

Evidently the revelations contained in this book must be monstrous; monstrous firstly to have succeeded in making the Germans blush; monstrous, above all, to have been able to make that sanest of the sane, the Kaiser, indignant.

At bottom, as everybody knows, the Emperor cares not a jot for Catholics or Catholicism, since, being the incarnation of his God upon earth, he has no dealings with *our* God, whom he does not know. But if he cares little for the Catholics, as Catholics, he thinks a good deal of them as cannon-

fodder. And as there are not a few tons of this in the Empire, this counts for something!

Now all the Germans, higgledy-piggledy, are at war. The author of the book in question has reason to complain of the manner in which this soldiery makes war, not from the technical point of view, but because of the barbarity of their treatment of Catholics. If the writer has cast his protest upon all the winds, it is because he had serious reasons for doing so.

What can he have said? Let us consider. Do not let us speak of France; we have, alas! enough and too much to say concerning what the gentle subjects of the gentlest of sovereigns have done in Belgium.

Systematically, they sought to demolish the metropolitan church of Saint-Rombaud at Malines. It is not their fault that we have not to mourn above its ruins. Once the thing was done they tried hard to say that it was the Belgians who had bombarded the cathedral. Since then they have avowed their noble exploit in No. 6 of the *Illustrierter Kriegskurier* (yet another magnificent specimen of high *kultur*, this!) Indeed, they printed in this paper this delightful gibberish: "Our view shows the cathedral from the direction of Brussels, therefore the side which has been exposed to the bombardment of the German shells. As may be seen, the cathedral has remained almost intact."

Almost intact! Is this regret? Or irony?

These, alas! are not almost intact—the collegiate church of Saint-Pierre at Louvain, the many poor, pretty churches of our countrysides. Strategy did not call for their disappearance. They were so humble. . . . Yet they were violated, defiled, spoliated, finally burned, by flames whose violence was multiplied tenfold by the incendiary oils which the soldiers "with clear consciences" cast upon the walls.

Who shall say what has become of the sacred vessels, some of which served to drink champagne out of, and others to receive . . . alas, we do not continue, for this paper would blush!

Who shall say what became of the consecrated Hosts, cast upon the pavement, ground and trampled underfoot, *panis angelicus, non mittendus canibus?*

Who shall tell the martyrdom of the murdered priests: of the gentle curé of Herent, of the priests of Surice, Latour, Étalle, etc.; of that quiet scholar of the Company of Jesus, struck down because he had written in his diary: "We behold again the invasions of the barbarians"; of my best friend, a holy man, a country curé, dead as a result of the brutalities inflicted upon him by butchers stinking of alcohol. . . .

And those priests, forced to walk naked before their parishioners, who had, under pain of death, to spit in their faces. And those who were forced to gallop through the market-place wearing the harness of horses. . . .

And, ruling over this martyred clergy, our venerable and beloved Archbishop, whom they would gladly have struck in the face had they dared—for with the German everything is calculation and premeditation—had they not feared lest the fall of this venerable man should be noised abroad in both hemispheres. . . .

To insult God, *our* God, Who is also yours, your Eminences of Munich and Cologne; to defile temples, to assassinate their ministers—these are abominable things; yet they almost pale, if I dare say it, when we remember with what perverse fury the German troopers have outraged women, lowly nuns who to-day hold up to heaven, while lowering in disgust the eyes of profaned virginity, the living fruit, the horrible proof of a baffling bestiality. . . .

Was it because of all this that the Cardinals von Bettinger and von Hartmann blushed?

Is it of these things that they are about to complain to the common Father of the faithful?

Surely!

But no—they are "showing off" before Wilhelm II., I.R.!

Then what do they want? That the book should be placed on the Index, in *odium auctoris?*

Come, your Eminences! Here is a good move!

Come to Belgium, yourselves; you are in your own home here! The motor-cars of the Kommandantur will carry you. Our great Cardinal shall go afoot. You will have the goodness to wait for him, will you not?—this sage, this saint,

this scholar, this ardent patriot, whom a Prussian quill-driver, installed in the Ministry of Justice, has dared to call a scamp, a *gamin !*

He will lead you, step by step, where crimes have been committed that are nameless, debauches and outrages without precedent; he will give you names and dates; he will give you so many, and before so many witnesses—*lapides clamabunt !*—that in the end you will be forced to abuse your faces, and you will find yourselves murmuring, with trembling lips, the prayer which you repeat every morning at the foot of the altar :

Judica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta : ab homine iniquo et doloso erue me !

Judge me, Lord, and confound not my cause with that of the wicked : deliver me from the unjust and the cunning !

Alas ! in German the translation of " The Truth before all " is *Deutschland über alles !*

Nevertheless, Most Eminent Lordships, if you should decide to come do not don your red robes. There is no need. One black robe under your mantle will suffice. When you shall have walked for a few hours your cassocks will be red, soaked in the blood of our martyrs. . . .

As a matter of fact, perhaps, you will come in full uniform, helmet on head, revolver at belt, like your chaplains. . . . It is an idea.

But then Mgr. Mercier will not care to walk beside you. . . . Inquiries are not conducted in that fashion *in our country.*

FIDELIS.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 34, July, 1915, p. 2, col. 2.)

They did not exhibit the products of the Wolff Agency only. From time to time they sought to undermine our courage by personal inventions.

A Calumny.

Many thousands of small placards have been posted on the walls of Brussels. These placards must have been printed

in Germany, for the Belgian printers do not possess neo-Gothic characters of the kind which has been employed in printing them :

Here is the text of these placards :

> *We, Belgian mothers and wives, are telling ourselves : Enough of slaughter, enough of the innocent blood of our husbands, our sons, has been shed for foreign nations. The honour of Belgium is saved. We have no tears left. We demand peace or an armistice.*

In the name of Belgian women we protest. Not one of them regrets the sacrifices she has made. Those who weep are weeping for the beloved one who has vanished for ever, but their tears are not tempered by any shameful regret such as the author of this infamous leaflet would attribute to them, no regret such as he would fain insinuate into their hearts. No, the Belgian women know that their husbands and sons and sweethearts have not fought for the foreigner. The first impulse, the first cry of every Belgian was this : " Honour demands that we oppose our weakness to the brutal force of the traitor who is attacking us, although he had sworn to protect us. We know how to keep an oath, even though it cost us our lives."

But if it was possible at that moment to delude ourselves, if we could then believe that only honour was at stake, and that it bade us make heroic sacrifices, how can one speak of " fighting for foreign nations," now that the whole country is invaded, and except upon a few acres of our soil, the barbarous invader is oppressing us and depriving us of every liberty ? Yes, our soldiers are fighting for their own country, but as that which gave them twofold strength and courage in the first months of the conflict was the feeling that honour must be kept intact, that injustice must be avenged, so that which inspires them now is a sentiment of equal nobility, a sentiment, if possible, even nobler than patriotism ; it is the conviction that they are serving, with the nations whose Allies they are, the sublime cause of Justice and Civilisation.

Let us once again repeat what we have already said : there are no longer Belgians, or Frenchmen, or Englishmen,

or Russians, or Serbs; there are only *Allies*. The Belgians who are incorporated in the Canadian or Australian contingents, those who are serving in the French or the British Army, those who are working in the munition factories those who wished to take part in the expedition to the Dardanelles, have fully realised this. They have realised that without these Allies our poor country would long ago have been crushed. As for the promises made by Germany in her ultimatum, no one would willingly disgrace himself even by considering them. One does not argue with honour; it commands, and one obeys.

LIBER.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 35, July, 1915, p. 3, col. 1.)

Lest these placards should not suffice to convince us, Germany enlightens us further, still gratuitously, in three other fashions:

(*a*) The Imperial Government distributes pamphlets in German, Flemish, and French, which are printed in Brussels on the presses of the *Moniteur Belge*. Among these we find *Conventions Anglo-belges* and the *Discours du chancelier à la séance du Reichstag, le 2 décembre*, 1914.

(*b*) We are not confined to the official publications. A number of German organisations print in several languages propagandist leaflets which are slipped into business letters. The Belgian firms in particular have received leaflets in French from the *Bureau des deutschen Handelstages, Berlin* and the *Kriegs-Auschuss der deutschen Industrie, Berlin*. In the majority of the leaflets which were sent to us during the first year of the war the subjects dealt with were the violation of Belgian neutrality and the burning of Louvain. One sees at once where the shoe pinches them.

(*c*) Lastly, there is not a Belgian having family relations with Germany, or even business relations, who does not receive numerous letters which are intended to convey conviction to his mind. All these missives repeat the same things, like a lesson learned by heart; but, precisely in order to avoid all suspicion on this point, the correspondents are careful to point out the fact that they are expressing their personal feelings.

Leczyza, *8th January*, 1915.

DEAR R——,

What a change since we last saw one another! The Germans in Belgium; myself, as a soldier, in Poland! How do you find yourself under the German rule? I hope you like the new government. We are certain that we shall win, and that Belgium will remain German.

Dear R——, write to me soon at the above address. I shall be so pleased to hear good news of you. What a pity that your poor beautiful country should have suffered so in the war! Louvain, Malines, Anvers, Bruges, have suffered so greatly! What a pity! If Belgium had followed the example of Luxemburg! I hope you are well, and also your dear parents.

Letter from a German Niece to her Belgian Uncle.

31st December, 1914.

This disastrous year is approaching its end, and we will hope that the new year will restore peace; and for you, for Jeanne, and for your little children, my husband and I wish all sorts of happiness in the year to come. You would not believe how sorry we Germans are for poor Belgium, and the Belgians will now assuredly see what a mistake they made in becoming the tributaries of England. If Belgium had remained the friend of Germany not the slightest harm would have happened to her. And the terrible fate which

has fallen to her lot she owes to the brutal participation of the people, and even of women and children, in the war.

Of this we (ourselves) have many proofs in the narratives of German officers and soldiers. How wise the people of Brussels are to remain quiet. We will hope that this state of affairs will last.

A soldier who was billeted with us writes to us from Staden, in the neighbourhood of the Yser Canal, that the Belgian people do not desire the return of the French and English, for their behaviour was inexpressibly shameful.

They will not return, for Germany is invincible, and you cannot imagine how many military reserves we still possess. In any case, the fact that owing to greed and jealousy an attempt has been made to annihilate a people which has attained the summit of civilisation, forming a wealthy and flourishing State, is without precedent in history.[1]

Yes, England has succeeded in turning the nations against us by means of her newspapers.

England can outdo us in one thing only: she can lie better.

And what a wretched opinion they must form of her, the readers of her articles, who often believe in all her lies and absurdities! One would not dare to relate such foolish stories to German readers!

How often has not our splendid Emperor offered France the hand of reconciliation? But she has repulsed it, from a blind and foolish sentiment of vengeance. The French and Belgians are not antipathetic to us. Why do they not ally themselves with us against greedy, cunning, faithless, perfidious England, who wants to subjugate the whole world? We still do not understand how it is that this is not realised in France. That is to say, there are those who realise it, but they dare not admit it, because they are afraid of—what, I don't know.

Dear uncle, I beg you to excuse my having dwelt too much

[1] The young person is referring not to Belgium, but to Germany.—(*Tr.*)

on the war, in telling you of my opinion, but all this means so much to me.

We are delighted to hear that you, Jeanne, and the children are well, and that the latter are so zealous in aiding the indigent.

Germany is still far from perishing of starvation. We have plenty of bread, potatoes, etc., till next harvest; our stock of cattle is considerable.

You would do well to make the French and English understand this, so that they may abandon their stupid illusions.

In France and England the people do not know this, owing to the suppression of the German newspapers.

Now I must end. We hope you will receive this letter, and we shall be delighted to have news of you, and Jeanne.

Friendly greetings also from my husband.

Your niece,
ELZA.

Extract from a Private Letter from Mlles. Y—and Z—.

12th February, 1915.

. . . We admit that we were surprised that in spite of reading the pamphlet *Die Wahrheit über den Krieg*, which we sent you, you should nevertheless hold a different opinion from ours. You ought, however, to remember that from all time the predominant qualities of the Germans have always been: truth and sincerity. You may therefore have absolute confidence in the account contained in the pamphlet in question, and in the *German White Book*, and may put your faith in it. After the conclusion of this war—a war forced upon us in a blackguardly fashion—you, too, will receive enlightenment as to the points which are still obscure to you, and you will admit the truth.

. . . We feel absolutely how much you must miss the usual white bread; so the last wheat harvest has been so bad with you? In this connection we lack absolutely nothing in Germany, neither does one find that anything is dearer, which is a great blessing. . . .

Postcard Received in Brussels in January, 1917.

DEAR ——,

How are you? Well, I hope. My husband is going on well too; he was wounded in the leg by a bullet, but he is on the way to recovery. In Brussels, no doubt, all is quiet. In Belgium, the English have sold and betrayed you. They are evil geniuses. It is to King Albert you owe that. Why did he not allow the Germans to pass? Leopold would have arranged it differently. Do not be afraid, the Germans do no harm to any; unless it is just.

My friendly greetings to your people.

2. GERMAN PUBLICATIONS SOLD IN BELGIUM

No one any longer has the slightest doubt as to the precise documentary value of the German newspapers; they are known to be under the thumb of the censorship, which is saying everything. However, there is one point which is not generally understood: namely, that certain of these journals publish two separate impressions, one for the Eastern front and one for the Western front. *La Libre Belgique* has reproduced in facsimile the headlines of the two editions of the *Düsseldorfer General Anzeiger* for the 14th of July, 1915.

Their Journalistic Methods.

Same date, same edition (*Abend-Ausgabe*). The second, third, and fourth pages of the two impressions are identical. Only the first page differs according to the public for which the journal is intended.

The impression to be sent to the Western front bears as a headline: "Russia Ripening for Peace." It contains news relating to Russia which the other does not print.

The impression intended for the Russian front bears the legend: "Fresh German Advance in the Argonne."

* * * * *

It was owing to an error of the postal service that a bundle of the second impression went astray into Belgium.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 41, August, 1915, p. 4.)

Let there be no mistake about it. There were really two distinct impressions (at least, as regards the first page), and not, as one might suppose, impressions which were simply ante-dated for one of the fronts. We were able to assure ourselves that the articles *Friedenspropaganda in England* and *Der Bergarbeiterstreik in Wales* on page 1 of No. 314 as sent to the Russian front never appeared in those on sale in Belgium.

The railway bookstalls and the newspaper kiosks in all the public places in Brussels offer illustrated newspapers for sale The two best known are *Die Woche* and the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*. The photographs reproduced in Plates VII. and VIII. show the sort of information they provide us with.

Die Woche, for example, shows us the fires lit by the German Army at Liége (Plate VII.). We learn that on the 20th of August, 1914, there were 400 Russian students, armed with rifles, who fired from the houses facing the University, when the latter was occupied by German troops. What a stupid action, was it not, on the part of these students! It is true that Germany was obliged, later, officially to recognise that these 400 *francs-tireurs* were invented owing to the necessities of the case. No Russian, in fact, figures on the list of those shot at Liége, a proof that the Russians cannot

PLATE VII.



"German Justice in Louvain: The Ruins of the Buildings Destroyed on the Place de l'Université, from which 400 Russian Students Fired on our Soldiers."

(From *Die Woche*, No. 30, 1914.)

PLATE VIII.



ARMED GUARD OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF A BELGIAN LOCALITY IN WHICH TELEGRAPHIC MESSAGES WERE TAPPED.

(FROM *Die Woche*, NO. 10, 1916.)

have been under the slightest suspicion of having taken part in the pretended aggression of *francs-tireurs*. Better still: a few days later the following placard was posted in the city (we reproduce it from G. Somville's *Vers Liége: le chemin de crime*, août 1914, p. 272):[1]

Six hundred Russian students, who hitherto have been a burden upon the population of Liége, to which they have caused a great deal of trouble, have been arrested and sent back by me.

The Lieutenant-General Governor.

If it had been possible to accuse these students of having fired on the German troops, the placard would have said as much in large type, and they would not have escaped with internment in the Münster camp.

The same journal informed the people of Brussels that hostages had been taken at Woluwe (Plate VIII.), a suburban neighbourhood whence the milkwomen daily come into the city with their dog-carts. They had never mentioned any incident of the kind!

If the poor peasants, flying from their burned and decimated villages, had not painted for us the ferocity of the German soldiers, the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, in the very first number which was sold in Brussels, would have enlightened us (Plate IX.). It shows us the women of a village being led away as prisoners. Were the men already shot?

Having massacred more than five thousand of our compatriots, and burned 26,000 houses, under the pretext that the Belgians had organised bands of

[1] Translated by B. Miall: "The Road to Liége: The Path of Crime." 1916. See p. 234. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

francs-tireurs,[1] Germany took pains to give us ocular evidence of the manner in which her Austro-Hungarian Allies arm the Ruthenian peasants. The *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* of the 16th of May, 1915, reproduced a photograph of an officer giving instructions to an armed peasant (Plate X.). The *Kultured* nations may do these things!

After the cynical, the ridiculous. In this connection the palm cannot reasonably be refused to the *Illustrierter Kriegskurier*, a semi-official newspaper whose sixteen pages cost only five centimes; the comments are given in German, Flemish, and French. A single example will suffice. In No. 3 there are three illustrations representing "The entry of the Division of German Marines into Antwerp." Hardly was the journal offered for sale than all Brussels was laughing; people took up their stand, with the newspaper in their hands, at the corner of the Rue de la Loi and the Rue Royale, in order to demonstrate to the passers-by that the photographs had been taken there, not in Antwerp.

The German newspaper-stalls sell books as well as newspapers. In the first place, there are narratives of war; for example, the works of F. von Zobeltitz, P. Höcker, von Gottberg, H. Osman, W. von Trotha, etc. There are also propagandist volumes: *Die Eroberung Belgiens*, *Luttich*, *Antwerpen*, etc.

[1] *Organised* bands of *francs-tireurs* are perfectly lawful in an invaded country. See the Hague Convention and the German military laws. In cases of sudden invasion they need not even organise themselves, beyond appointing officers. So that even had there been a guerilla defence the Germans would have had no cause of complaint, nor any excuse for treating prisoners other than as ordinary prisoners of war.—(*Tr.*)

The following instance will show how truthful these volumes are:

A Leipzig publisher has recently published a book in which the clumsy accusations of atrocities directed against our country, since the beginning of the conflict, by the Teutonic Press, were repeated and amplified. A special chapter of this volume was devoted to the city of Antwerp. The population was accused of giving itself over to serious assaults, of having thrown women and children out of windows, etc. The author even added the precise detail that no less than thirty German corpses had been picked up in the Avenue de Keyser!

Justly incensed by the publicity given to such tales, and anxious at the same time once for all to make an example of the calumniation of Belgium, the City of Antwerp decided to bring an action for 100,000 francs damages and costs against the publisher of the libel.

But the German authorities were on the alert. . . . Warned of the intentions of the City, and fearing the sensation which the evidence given at such a trial—a trial in which the vileness of the methods dear to the German calumniator would be thoroughly exposed—could not fail to produce abroad, the authorities addressed to the Communal Administration of the capital a letter in which they forbade it, *for political reasons*, to bring such a case.

They could not have admitted their offence with greater thoughtlessness and ingenuousness.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 80, quoted by the *Courrier de l'Armée*, No. 229, 3rd August, 1916.)

In Belgium, too, are sold German replies (but published in French) to the books which we can obtain only surreptitiously; for example, the works of M. Waxweiler (see pp. 6 and 10), and Mgr. Baudrillart.

Guilty Belgium.

Under this title a pamphlet has just appeared in Berlin, under the signature of Herr Grasshoff, in reply to M. Waxweiler's *La Belgique neutre et loyale.*

Since our excellent Governor is so kind as to permit the reply to M. Waxweiler to be placed at the disposal of the Belgians, it seems to us that it would only be an act of strict justice to allow us to read the book itself. Hitherto only a few privileged persons have been able to obtain it, at the price of God knows what ruses and what peril. Knowing the extreme sense of fairness of the government which rules over us, we feel confident that in a few days we shall see the two books displayed side by side in the booksellers' windows.

In the meantime we are wondering if it was not a very bad speculation on the author's part to have his book translated into French. For although his arguments may, perhaps, possess some value in the eyes of the German, we doubt if they can possess any for Belgians, who have seen with their own eyes what happened when the country was invaded.

Inhabitants of Louvain, Dinant, Tamines, and Aerschot, and all you Belgians—for who is there that does not number among his kinsfolk at least one victim of the barbarians ?—read these extracts from the accounts given by German soldiers, and tell me if, after reading them, you are not stupefied and filled with indignation by the audacity of such falsehoods :

1. LOUVAIN.

" It is untrue that an arbitrary selection of the persons accused determined the fate of those who were shot. Strict legality, on the contrary, was observed at the inquiries. *I was instructed to search the people, to see if they carried arms, and I found a great many did.* I was also instructed to discover whether the persons accused were Belgian soldiers in disguise, a thing easily proved by the identification-plate. *On a great number of the prisoners I found the military identification-plate in the pocket of the purse.* Captain Albrecht, who directed the inquiry, proceeded in such a way that he ordered those prisoners who were found to be carrying a weapon or a military identification-plate to be shot, or those

concerning whom it was attested by at least two witnesses, either that they themselves had fired upon the German troops, or that they had been captured in a house whence the troops had been fired upon. *It is my firm conviction that it is absolutely impossible that completely innocent persons could thus have lost their lives.*"

2. ANDENNE.

"On our arrival in this place a signal was given by the church bell, at 6.30 p.m., and at the same moment the iron shutters of all the houses were lowered: the inhabitants, who had hitherto been standing in the street, disappeared, and my troops were fired on from all directions, but particularly from the gratings of cellars and holes made in the roofs by removing the tiles. *Moreover, from a large number of houses boiling water was poured upon our soldiers.* As a result of this ambush, which the conduct of my men in nowise justified, there was a desperate battle in the streets between them and the civil population. The proof that this was assuredly a plan executed in advance, in which almost the entire population of Andenne and the suburbs took part, *is that* 100—*one hundred—of my men were wounded merely by the scalds produced by boiling water.*"

3. DINANT.

"Some parents, according to an inhabitant of the town, placed revolvers in the hands of children of ten to twelve years, that they might fire on the German troops. One little boy, arrested, then released on account of his youth, boasted himself of having shot down five Germans."

No comment is needed.

As for pillage, please understand it was wholly the work of the Belgians, the French, and (above all) of the English.

People of Tongres, you are completely mistaken. I think you must have been dreaming when you thought you beheld your silver plate methodically sorted and arranged on the pavement in front of your houses, before being packed and sent away. It was to get you and your children to take an open-air cure, a very healthy proceeding, that you were made to spend two nights in the open. And although on your re-

turn you found your houses more or less pillaged, the German soldiery had nothing to do with this: you must blame the bands of thieves which swarm throughout Belgium.

Herr Grasshoff does not inform us how these thieves were able to remain in the town, or to get into it, when all the inhabitants had been driven out, and the Germans kept a careful watch to see that no one entered it. He forgets to explain this detail. However, he forgets to mention Tongres when speaking of pillage, and he forgets Malines also. This chapter of his book is a trifle confused and incomplete. It is true that he has forgotten a great many things, among others to reply to M. Waxweiler in respect of the Military Code of the General Staff, and the commentaries upon this code made by German jurists. Yet this point constitutes one of the bases of M. Waxweiler's argument, in which he proves that the German cruelties and massacres are merely the logical application of the principles of this code. Thus he proves that, unlike the excesses and abuses which may, as exceptions, occur in any army, the German atrocities *were committed to order.*

But is it really certain, as a matter of fact, that Herr Grasshoff has read M. Waxweiler's book? We wonder; he has failed to throw light on so many important points.

* * * * *

La Belgique coupable is evidently intended to enlighten us concerning the violation of Belgian neutrality. Here we must admit that the author has, after the lapse of a year, something new and really sensational. We knew that all the Germans (they alone, of course) were convinced, or pretended to be convinced, that aeroplanes had flown over Belgium, and that French soldiers were hidden in the forts of Liége. Well, here is something better than that: 8,000 men, two regiments of dragoons, and some batteries, were at Bouillon and in the neighbourhood on the *31st of July*. No one saw them, but it was so, since two prisoners say it was so; they even say that the Belgian population gave them an excellent welcome. How was the evidence of these prisoners obtained? That is the question which neutral readers will possibly ask themselves. Here, in Belgium, we can form some conjecture: we are familiar, by experience, with the inquiry at the muzzle

of the revolver, the interrogatory with the menace of death, or after exhaustion by starvation. We all know these pretty expedients of "Boche justice." Another proof of violation: It seems that someone saw, in Brussels, on the 26th of July—please listen carefully—two French officers and an English officer, in uniform. Obviously these gentlemen could not have come here except to confer with our General Staff. Only, Messieurs our Allies-before-the-event, why did you come here in uniform on a secret mission? Frankly, how thoughtless! It is easy to see that you are not Germans.

And now, dear readers, if you are not convinced that the French and English were the first to violate our neutrality, and that we ought to have welcomed the Germans with open arms, it is because you are an argumentative person. Under the new government your mind will be taught to form its convictions according to discipline.

Before closing this chapter let us mention yet another instance of "forgetfulness" on the part of our author: he does not breathe a word of the Chancellor's admission.

Yet this admission is not without a certain importance, when it comes to discussing the question of the violation of Belgian neutrality. But he does not forget to serve up yet again the story of the famous Anglo-Belgian conventions. We shall not weary our readers by refuting it afresh.

La Belgique coupable teaches us yet another new thing. You have not failed to hear some mention of the war of *francs-tireurs*, the national war, as Herr Grasshoff calls it, the great stalking-horse of the enemies of our country when they wish to excuse the massacres committed by their army.

But you were not, perhaps, aware that this war of *francs-tireurs* was foreseen and prepared for by our Government,[1] as was also the Commission of Inquiry into the violation of the law of nations, and the campaign of "calumnies" against the German Army. It may even be—but of this Herr Grasshoff is not quite sure—that the Anglo-Belgian conventions had already made provision for this defensive organisation of the Belgian nation. As he is doubtful, our author is

[1] In which case no military jurist would have raised any objection to it.—(*Tr.*)

strenuously willing to acquit England of responsibility in this affair, and to hold the Belgian Government wholly responsible.

He sees a proof of his theory in all the circulars on the subject of the Civic Guard. For him the non-active Civic Guard and the *franc-tireur* are the same, or almost the same. Yet, as M. Waxweiler has so clearly demonstrated, had this Civic Guard of the countryside fired on the enemy—as it did not—it would merely have exercised the rights conferred upon it by the Hague Conventions.

But even the circular addressed by the Minister, M. Berryer, to the communal administrations, that circular which so admirably recapitulates their duty toward the occupying authority as well as toward the lawful authority, is regarded as of criminal intent Why will not Herr Grasshoff permit the King's Government to be called the " only lawful " authority ? We have re-examined this circular, and the phrases underlined with intention by Herr Grasshoff merely convince us once more of the Government's desire to observe, and to cause others to observe, a strict legality, and to remind the authorities of their duties.

There is also the little placard, which was pasted up everywhere and reproduced by all the newspapers, recommending the population to remain quiescent You will doubtless remember this phrase : " An act of violence committed by a single civilian would be a veritable crime, which is punishable by law, etc " Now this is what the imagination of Herr Grasshoff extracts from this ·

" The term a *single civilian* employed in this proclamation strikes one immediately, owing to the twofold interpretation which may be placed upon it. This *single civilian* who is forbidden to fire readily gives rise, in the brain of a simple man, to the idea that *it is permissible to fire if two or three are gathered together.*"

Peremptory, isn't it ? This literally dumbfounds one.

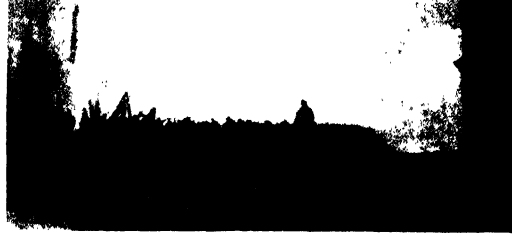
As for the Commission of Inquiry, it appears—again, on the authority of Herr Grasshoff—that " its invitation to report instances of German brutality antedated the material possibility of their accomplishment."

The truth is that the Commission was founded on the 8th,

PLATE IX.



(a) "REMOVAL OF THE INHABITANTS OF A BELGIAN VILLAGE, WHICH HAD TO BE DESTROYED BECAUSE OF THE INFAMOUS DEEDS OF ITS INHABITANTS."



(b) "OUR TROOPS ON THE MARCH THROUGH A BURNING VILLAGE."

(From the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, 6th September, 1914.)

PLATE X



A REAL FRANC-TIREUR

"FROM THE CARPATHIAN FRONT—RUTHENIAN PEASANT AS ARMED RAILWAY AND TELEGRAPH GUARD WITH THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMY."

From the *Illustrirte Kriegs-Zeitung*, 10th MAY, 1915.

and we know with what barbarity and cruelness the laws of warfare were violated by the German troops between the 4th and 7th of August, on the frontier.

* * * * *

It is superfluous to remark that we have not been able to mention here all the errors and falsehoods contained in Herr Grasshoff's work. We have endeavoured merely to show the value of his arguments and the evidence which he invokes. In this connection we venture—very humbly, since we are not a doctor of German law, nor of German philosophy—to call his attention to the fact that it is not logical to attribute so much importance, when the question of *francs-tireurs* is at issue, to the tales of neutrals founded on—among other things—mere remarks overheard in the tram-cars, for it has just been proved, in connection with the German atrocities, how far one can depend on tales passed from mouth to mouth. We will also observe that it is not becoming for a German to deride the errors of the enemy Press, when one knows what colossal fabrications have been spread abroad by the Boche newspapers: witness, to mention only one instance, the story of the taking of Brussels after a bitterly contested battle and a desperate resistence lasting for several days!

It was in one of those tales of neutrals, of which we have just spoken, that we found this detail—otherwise of no importance—which forced us to smile: "At Nieuport, in a villa occupied by Belgian soldiers, the water-closets were choked." Horror!!! Well, we readily admit that German soldiers would not have done such a thing as that; they have too much respect—and their officers also—for this little spot. They respect it to such a point that they dare not cross its threshold, and prefer to reserve, for such purposes, valuable china, glassware, quilts, beds and carpets, or even the boxes in which provisions are stored.

* * * * *

We cannot bring this article to a close better than by reproducing some of the conclusions contained in Herr Grasshoff's work:

"*Two hundred and thirty-five localities, whose geographical*

position may readily be found, served as lairs of francs-tireurs ; to these we must add forty-six other localities whose position we have been unable to find on the maps at our disposal, as a rule because of defective writing. *The passage of the German Army through Belgium has been a positive Calvary,* over which only a discipline superior to any trial could have triumphed."

* * * * *

" *There is not in the whole world a single army which is in a condition to employ gentler measures than those we have employed.* Their employment *has saved Central Belgium and Western Belgium from the inevitable destruction which street-fighting would necessarily have involved.*"

* * * * *

" One is amazed, on reading the records of German justice in the occupied territories, by the predominance of the number of acquittals ; the misdemeanours of the inhabitants of the territories in question are tried *with the strict impartiality of the German mind.*"

* * * * *

" We are now at the close of this survey. Let us turn our gaze from the past to consider the future. The spring has once again returned. Behind the front where the armies are contending, *the sinewy hand of the German soldier guides the plough in the fields of Belgium,* to furnish bread, not to his own family, but to the Belgian people, unworthily betrayed by its own Government and abandoned to the horrors of famine by its good friends of England. In all directions German assiduity is endeavouring to arouse the drowsy Belgian spirit and to kindle it by its breath to what it was before the war. We do not greatly trouble ourselves as to the continual squallings with which the *Echo Belge* makes its columns resound, filled with the everlasting crimes of the Barbarians. They cannot disturb our task. We bear within us the sense of duty which, according to Kant, constitutes the sole human ideal, the only proper worth of mankind. This war, to which we have been constrained, imposes upon us the duty of realising the liberty of the Fatherland, the liberty of the human family. This duty we shall fulfil !

"Will M. Waxweiler be able to tear himself from his repose and participate in the heavy task of restoring her prosperity to Belgium? The day is coming when this poor people, so ill-governed, will emerge from its ignorance, and will at last distinguish the good grain from the tares among those who flatter themselves that they preside over its destinies:

"For Germany there is only one motto:

'*Sit ut est aut non sit. Erit in aevum!*'"

But one is left musing, wondering what degree of ignorance of the truth still characterises the German nation, that it is able to swallow such monstrous lies.

B. A. R. F.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 46, September, 1915, p. 2, col. 1.)

The Widowhood of Truth.

The German authorities are purposely distributing throughout the country a French edition of the reply of the German Catholics to the manifesto of the French Catholics, a reply drafted, as is known, by Abt. Rosenberg, and countersigned by a regiment of notabilities who have not read it. With that obtuse *naïveté* which is at the bottom of their bragging and their cynicism, our masters imagine, apparently, that this statement, intended to deceive foreigners, is going to deceive us, and make us forget the testimony of our consciousness and our eyes. Like a malefactor whom the habit of lying, pushed to mental aberration, should impel to indoctrinate his very victim. To Belgian readers this lamentable plea does not call for any sort of refutation. But it will be a genuine relief to many of them to learn that this defamatory apology has already received its punishment. A German-speaking neutral, M. Emile Prüm, Burgomaster of Clervaux (Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg) has refuted it in a masterly and vengeful fashion in a little book entitled *Der Witwenstand der Wahrheit* ("The Widowhood of Truth"). This is the very expression which a German writer has employed to characterise the facility with which a lie gains acceptance in these days. Original or otherwise, their senti-

mental metaphor is only too just in reference to Germany: the truth is widowed there; further, she is denied by her children!

M. Prüm is a militant Catholic. His courageous pamphlet, intended for the Catholics of all countries, is addressed in the first place to his compatriots, who, like himself, were united by close and numerous ties to the German Centre: it is therefore written from the very point of view which those whom it refutes sought to adopt, which, in the case at issue, is a circumstance that greatly aggravates their evil act. In this respect it is of interest to all Belgians irrespective of their opinions. They will be delighted to see to what a point Abt. Rosenberg and his co-signatories have succeeded in disgusting one of their best friends. As for the German authorities, they, we are assured, have made M. Prüm a reply worthy of him and of themselves: they have thrown him into prison on a charge of seditious publication. "Brigadier, you are right! . . ." But this will not resuscitate the defunct for whom the German Truth is wearing mourning!

BELGA.

La Libre Belgique,

(quoted by *L'Écho Belge,* 13th March, 1916.)

The most perfidious of these books and pamphlets are those which profess to be written by good Belgians, but which are without doubt the work of Germans in disguise.

Teutonic Tartuferie.

We have had the courage to read through to the end three little works by a Teuton, concealed behind the mask of a philanthropist, despite the nausea we suffered in reading these lines, distilling gall and venom. These compositions are entitled: "An Open Letter to the Belgian People." The writer, who courageously remains anonymous, warns the reader that he will close his ears and let people bawl if they will. So be it: it is his right, just as the Belgians who read

these lucubrations may stop their noses, for they give off such a stench that it is as well to have recourse to an antiseptic after one has perused them.

We will reproduce two or three phrases, in order to show just how far cerebral decomposition may proceed in certain individuals, before the specialists in insanity and the health department trouble them.

He (our King) ought to insist on peace with Germany. Enough Belgian blood; husbands, wives, mothers, brothers, sisters, sweethearts, friends, I implore you, in the name of humanity, to insist upon peace; or at least insist that you shall be allowed to address, to the commander-in-chief of his armies, a prayer that an armistice be arranged. . . . Let us offer the Congo as the ransom of our independence . . . who knows whether, on the conclusion of peace, this attitude will not procure for us favourable treatment; it may be that he (Attila) will take our submission into account, etc.

This passage is selected from among the less foolish and ignoble, for there are some which we should not, out of respect for our readers, venture to transcribe.

But there is only one thing in all this which disconcerts us; it is that this anonymous writer—as to whose nationality we are not left in the slightest doubt—should have been able to find a printer.

One of two things must have happened: either the printer was forced to comply, or he acted willingly, and in the latter case there is only one verdict to be given, which is, that he is a worthy fellow to the "philanthropist."

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 39, August, 1915, p. 3, col. 2.)

La Libre Belgique did not know who had printed this pamphlet. M. Passelecq informs us:

Among these pamphlets let us mention a series of three "Open Letters to the Belgian People," by "A Philanthropist," bearing, as the publisher's imprint, "Van Moer, rue Euphrasie (*sic*) Beernaert, Ostende." Now there is no printer of this name in the Rue Euphrosine-Beernaert, Ostend. The German forgers had therefore borrowed a Belgian name in order to

deceive the public. From an inquiry made by the Brussels Bar, it appears that the pamphlets in question were printed by one Herr Kropp, a German, Rue de Ruysdael, at Molenbeck-Saint-Jean (Brussels), who before the war published the *Brussele Zeitung*, a German weekly; he is at present the official publisher to the Kommandantur, and prints, among other suspect publications, the German-Flemish newspaper, *Gazet van Brussel*.

(*Passelecq, Pour teutoniser la Belgique*, p. 41, note. Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1916.)

Lastly, there are the picture-postcards. In addition to numerous sentimental compositions (of that fatuous sentimentality peculiar to Germany), there are some which aspire to be regarded as documentary records. They show us, for example, "The Uhlans before Paris," gazing at the Eiffel Tower, or "The Assault on the Fortress of Liége" (Liége being an open town, with neither ramparts nor fortifications). Let us also mention the card representing the "battles in the streets of Louvain," in which we perceive the frantic attack of the *francs-tireurs* (Plate XII). This card resulted in a sentence for a Brussels magistrate, M. Ernst.

The Painful Adventure of a Brussels Magistrate.

Readers, friends of *La Libre Belgique*, listen, for your diversion, to this adventure, of which one of the most congenial of our Brussels magistrates was at once the hero and the victim. The adventure is, for the rest, suggestive in several respects; it shows us what a cat-o'-nine-tails sort of government the Germans would subject us to if they could only indulge themselves to their heart's content; it also shews how far they excel in the ingenious art of inventing accusations and coining money out of imaginary misdemeanours.

Now, some little time ago, strolling along the Boulevard

du Nord, our magistrate discovered in the window of a *Deutsche Buchhandlung* a postcard representing the sack of Louvain. With the exactitude (?) of the photographic document, the card showed the civilians of Liége in ambush at every street-corner, and treacherously firing upon the brave German soldiers. Assuredly a document by which the *Herren Professoren* will profit in order to justify and whitewash Germany, the appointed champion of the rights of humanity and knightly honour. But, sceptical by profession and well aware of the "fakes" of the photographer, our magistrate wisely reflected that it was hardly probable that a photographer should have been posted at that exact point on the 25th of August, and he suspected a fraud. His judgment was correct. A more careful examination enabled him to perceive that the fraud was glaringly visible, and in his indiscreet zeal for the truth our magistrate divulged his discovery to the bookseller.

Do you suppose the honest shopkeeper bowed his thanks? By no means: he was annoyed. And as the magistrate apparently intended to persist in his remonstrances, he hailed some German soldiers who were passing, and had the magistrate arrested. The magistrate was not too greatly concerned about this adventure, but he wondered what would be the result of it.

The result was a commitment on the charge of—mark it well—violation of domicile (trespass)! ! ! the case being sent before the military tribunal! The accusation was ludicrous, but the German tribunals are not particular in this respect: they partake of the German mentality, which does everything to order, and they condemned our magistrate to pay a fine of 300 marks.

Our magistrate replied: "I, pay 300 marks fine? I have not got them!"

"You have not got them? That is very improbable," was the opinion of the German authorities. And on the following day, at dawn, a non-commissioned officer, flanked by four marauders, with fixed bayonets, presented himself at the dwelling-house of the delinquent. The non-commissioned officer, who in civil life must have been something of an expert in furniture, proceeded to make a rapid valua-

tion, and had soon made his selection. "Take that bronze," he told his men, "that set of mantel ornaments, this bit of Sèvres. . . ." His men complied with the readiness of professional furniture-removers, indeed they were depriving the magistrate of nearly ten times the value of the fine inflicted. Seeing this, the magistrate was forced to capitulate. He found the 300 marks and paid them.

German justice was thus satisfied.

Perhaps. It is quite capable of discovering that the capitulation of the Brussels magistrate was a bad stroke of business as far as it was concerned.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 38, August, 1915, p. 2, col. 2.)

3. Newspapers which Profess to be Belgian

In Brussels all the newspapers without exception refused to submit to German control. After a fortnight had elapsed new journals appeared. These were subject to the censorship.

To begin with these newspapers did not publish the official *communiqués* of the Allies. But after some weeks had passed the censorship allowed them to reproduce a few passages of these *communiqués*. Not always, however, as we learn from the following paragraph:

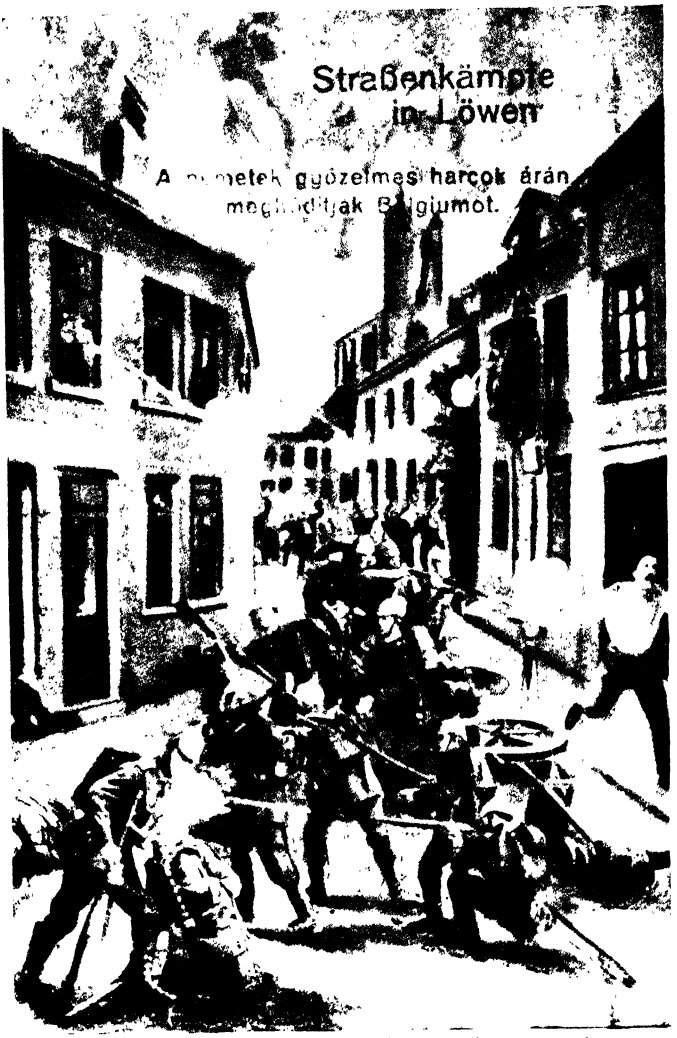
The French Communiqués.

Our readers may perhaps find it strange that we do not publish the official French *communiqués* with greater regularity. The reason for this is very simple. *There are no longer any such communiqués, or hardly any.*

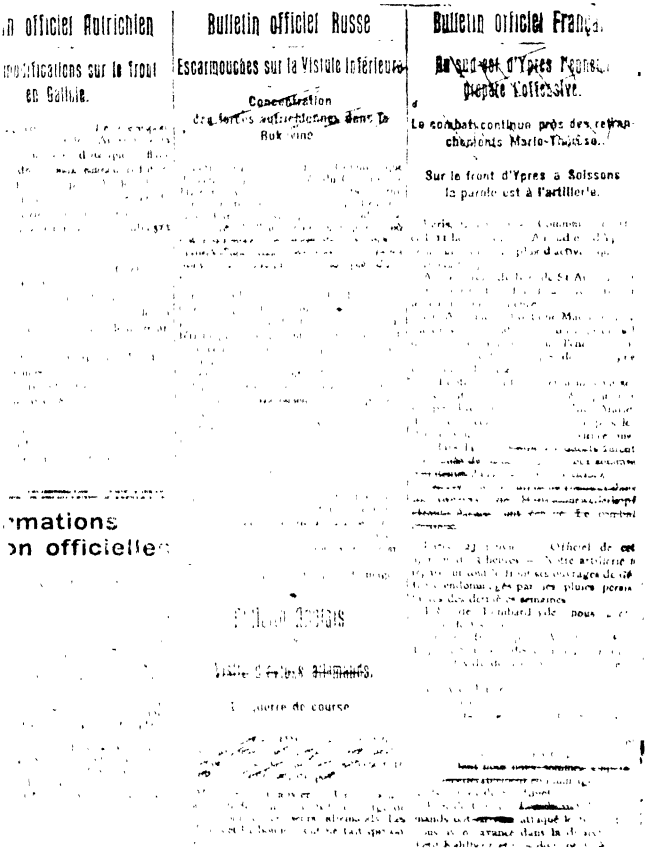
The utmost the Government does is to publish a few lines from time to time.

The pretext given is that it does not wish to provide the Germans with any indication as to the positions of the Allied troops, but wishes to conceal the movements of the latter.

(*La Bruxellois*, 26th October, 1914.)



A "Faked" German Postcard: The Francs-Tireurs of Louvain.



...n officiel Autrichien

... modifications sur le front en Galicie.

...rmations
...on officielle...

Bulletin officiel Russe

Escarmouches sur la Vistule inférieure.

Concentration des forces autrichiennes dans la Bukovine

Bulletin officiel Français.

Au sud-est d'Ypres reprise... Grande offensive.

Le combat continue près des retranchements Marie-Thérèse...

Sur le front d'Ypres à Soissons la parole est à l'artillerie.

...guerre de course

Here is a little quotation from *Le Temps* which enables us to test this assertion. Let us add that it is not stated in any of the French *communiqués* that the Government wishes to hide the movements of the troops :

Number of lines in the French official *communiqués* published by *Le Temps*.

The *communiqués* of the—

15th	of	October,	1914,	contained 25 lines.
16th	,,	,,	,,	12
17th				18
18th				18
19th				30
20th	,,	,,	,,	29
21st	,,	,,	,,	16
22nd				24
23rd				43

Still later the "official *communiqués*" were once more tolerated.

Unfortunately for the Germans we still obtain French newspapers which have not been mutilated, which enable us to restore the original text of the *communiqués* and, at the same time, to expose the imposition practised by the journals subjected to the censorship. It must be supposed that the occupying Government realised the uselessness of its mutilations, for from July to August, 1915, the Allies' *communiqués* usually appeared in their complete form in the Brussels Press. What is more, the *Kolnische Zeitung* itself gives the text of these *communiqués* in a form almost free from falsification.

Nevertheless, numerous articles are in every issue curtailed by the scissors of the censorship. At first

the newspapers used simply to leave blank spaces in place of the mutilations. But the reader was thereby warned of the omission, a thing the Germans could not allow. They therefore had published in Brussels, for the use of the muzzled dailies, two typewritten journals: *Le Courrier belge*, "all of whose articles have passed the censorship," and the *Hollando-Belge* (*sic*), which enjoys the same prerogatives. The emasculated newspapers are required to cut plasters from these of an area sufficient to hide the amputation.

Here is another example of what is left of a text after the censorship has run amok through it:

German Science.

Gonus mendacio natum

One would never make an end of unmasking the system of reticence and falsehoods by which the German Government endeavours to mislead Belgian opinion. The system is always undergoing development, and occasionally, alas, finds a lamentable complicity among those who yesterday called themselves our countrymen.

Here is a fresh example: I have before me two yellow-covered volumes printed at No. 32, Rue Van-Schoor, Brussels, and entitled: "History of the War of 1914–1915, from the official documents."

Such a title is a promise, a pledge of honour . . . in countries devoid of *Kultur*. But the book is authorised by the Imperial Government, and who says "German censorship" says "falsification." The documents of the Central Powers are reproduced faithfully and completely (at least, we suppose so). As for the documents of the Allies, let the reader judge, from this example, taken *from among a hundred*, what happens to them in such a publication.

We have here the well-known report of Sir Edward Goschen,

one of the most important diplomatic documents of the war. Let us compare it with the garbled version:

THE GARBLED TEXT.	THE AUTHENTIC TEXT.
Histoire de la Guerre, I., p. 206, *et seq.*)	
I found the Chancellor visibly disturbed.	I found the Chancellor *very agitated. His Excellency at once began a harangue, which lasted for about twenty minutes.*
His Excellency said the decision of His Britannic Majesty was terrible.	He said that the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree; *just for a word*—" neutrality," *a word which in war time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper,*
England is kindling war between two sister nations which at bottom could only desire to live at peace. All our efforts have been in vain.	Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and *the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office had tumbled down like a house of cards.*
What you are doing is unimaginable; you are like a man who attacks from behind one who is already struggling with two assailants.	What we had done was unthinkable; it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants.
I protested vigorously against his arguments.	I protested strongly against that statement, and said that, *in the same way as he*

and Herr von Jagow wished me to understand that for strategical reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter's neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter of "life and death" for the honour of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could any have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future? The Chancellor said: "But at what price will that compact have been kept? Has the British Government thought of that?" I hinted to his Excellency as plainly as I could that fear of consequences could hardly be regarded as an excuse for breaking solemn engagements, but his Excellency was so excited, so evidently overcome by the news of our action, and so little disposed to hear reason that I refrained from adding fuel to the flame by further argument.

The rest of the account of the interview is in keeping with this, but—and here there is a descent into the ridiculous—although Sir Edward Goschen's story of the scrap of paper is omitted, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's miserable attempt

at refutation is reproduced *in extenso*. on p. 465 of the second volume.

And this is how, during the last thirteen months, the " final " history of the war is being written across the Rhine Falsification, like everything else, is organised in military fashion. Does a document deserve any more consideration than a treaty ?

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 49, October, 1915, p. 2, col. 1.)

How do the " Belgian " newspapers bear the muzzle ? An article from *La Belgique* (a censored paper published in Brussels) reproduced and commented upon by *L'Echo belge*, of The Hague, will inform us :

One Ray Nyst, a journalist by profession, publishes in a daily paper printed in the occupied country some facts relating to the *censorship*. It will be as well not to forget these in the hour of victory. We shall not, of course, take the trouble to discuss M. Nyst's opinion, but it is as well that our readers should take note of it :

" The censorship ! A terrific business ! From a distance, what a bugbear ! Close at hand, it is nothing. Have you never had in your hands any of those debauched (*sic*) and pseudo-patriotic lampoons which are published under a cloak ? These writings which circulate dangerous and provocative appeals (is it to *La Libre Belgique* that M. Nyst is addressing himself ?) contrary to all sentiments of rectitude, and which are the very negative of the evolution of justice and of the Hague Conference ? These are the newspapers which would have reason to fear the censorship !

" In the case of an honest sheet which dares to come into the open, the German censorship follows the rules of all censorships, national or foreign. The Government, voluntary or imposed, is always the judge of the expediency of allowing this or that item of news of a political or military order to be known or otherwise. International law and the conferences are agreed upon this point. And common sense, too ! The

censorship does not create newspapers nor scientific treatises; the censorship imposes nothing; it erases, suppresses; it modifies nothing, corrects nothing, adds nothing. The censorship constitutes part of the machinery of public order, whose occupant is obliged to keep on the alert, in conformity with the Hague Conferences."

And further on:

"This question of the censorship is in reality of wider significance than the letter which raises it. My desire is not to defend the censorship. I have sought to show that a press and editors possessed of judgment, equity, education, and the ability to control their tongues retain a sufficiency of independence under the censorship system."

"Give me a line from no matter what article," said Machin, "and I will undertake to get its author condemned!"

Here are more than thirty lines of M. Ray Nyst's. They are enough to enable us to judge of his neutrality! and to udge is to condemn!

(*L'Echo belge*, 16th October, 1915.)

The same M. Ray Nyst published in the Brussels *La Belgique* for September, 1915, a series of articles urging the Belgian workers to place themselves at the service of the German Army. One can hardly believe that a Belgian could *proprio motu* write such enormities; so let us be generous to M. Nyst, and suppose that he allowed his hand to be forced.

Our enemies, for that matter, do not scruple to insist upon the insertion of articles in newspapers of doubtful repute. One cannot doubt, for example, that the dithyrambics addressed to the Military Governor of Namur were forced upon *L'Ami de l'Ordre*, a Namur newspaper which is also sold in Brussels.

How the Embochés[1] Newspapers are Useful to the Germans.

"L'Ami de l'Ordre" pays its respects to His Excellency von Hirschberg.

L'Ami de l'Ordre, which continues to appear at Namur under the control of the German authorities, published, a few days ago, the following paragraph:

"His Excellency Baron von Hirschberg, Military Governor of the fortified place and province of Namur, to-day enters upon his sixty-first year.

"Our mutual positions do not permit us to address the fitting good wishes and congratulations to the representative of the occupying authority, but we do not think that we are failing in any of our duties or any of our convictions in recognising that to the exercise of the high office which he has filled here for more than a year, he has brought good-will, tact, and delicacy. Under his government those sensational incidents which have disturbed other provinces have in our district been few and far between.

"We hope that the present situation will come to an end as soon as possible, but as long as it lasts we shall hope that Herr Baron von Hirschberg will still continue, in the future, a system of justice and tolerance in our city and our province, which have suffered so greatly in the horrible world-war."

One must read and re-read this passage in order to appreciate its unspeakable platitude. What delicious wording, what delightful euphemisms! His Excellency—our mutual position—high office—good-will, tact, delicacy—sensational incidents—system of justice and tolerance—everything is genuinely touching in this masterpiece, which does not even utter the name of Germany.

We ask ourselves if we are dreaming when we reflect that the journal which wreathes garlands for the representative of the Kaiser is published at Namur, at a distance of a few paces from the ruins heaped up by the Boches, at a distance

[1] An untranslatable pun. *Emboché* means, of course, Germanised; *embauché* means hired, tampered with, enticed away, enlisted.—(*Tr.*)

of a few miles from Dinant, Andenne, and Tamines, three towns which by themselves witnessed the massacre of more than a thousand inoffensive, when one remembers that this paper owes its past prosperity to a clergy thirty members of which were shot and more than two hundred maltreated, as their Bishop has testified.

This is what is printed in *L'Ami de l'Ordre*, imposed as the official gazette upon all the communes of the horribly-ravaged provinces of Namur and Luxemburg.

Reproduced in the German Press, articles like these will serve as an argument against the unfortunate inhabitants of the Namur district, and against all the Belgians. For we have not learned that Namur has escaped the fresh monthly contribution of 40,000,000 francs which has been imposed upon Belgium; on the contrary, we reproduced, the other day, three long columns of penalties inflicted for the most futile reasons—or the most patriotic—upon a host of the inhabitants of the Namur district.

All this does not prevent the editors of *L'Ami de l'Ordre* from proclaiming that the government under which the province of Namur is existing is a system of justice and toleration. . . .

The rare Belgian newspapers which have reappeared under the German censorship had to justify themselves by declaring that they were necessary to cheer and encourage the population, and that they would never write a line which could injure the Belgian cause.

We see, by the example of *L'Ami de l'Ordre*—and many other examples might be mentioned—how the K. K. journals conform with this programme. If they praise the German authorities so highly, it is because they have need of protection against the popular indignation. We are not very confident that they are so anxious as they profess "that the present situation should come to an end as quickly as possible."

(*Le XX^e Siecle*, 30th January, 1916.)

Despite the severity of the censorship, facetious persons succeed in inserting in the "Belgian" newspapers articles whose significance is not perceived by

the Germans. Here is an acrostic which surreptitiously found its way into the pages of *L'Ami de l'Ordre*:

La Guerre.[1]

Ma sœur, vous souvient-il qu'aux jours de notre enfance,
En lisant les hauts faits de l'histoire de France,
Remplis d'admiration pour nos frères gaulois,
Des généraux fameux nous vantions les exploits ?
En nos âmes d'enfants, les seuls noms de victoires
Prenaient un sens mystique, évocateur des gloires ;
On ne rêvait qu'assauts, et combats : à nos yeux
Un général vainqueur était l'égal des dieux.
Rien ne semblait ternir l'éclat de ces conquêtes ;
Les batailles prenaient des allures de fêtes,
Et nous ne songions pas qu'aux hourras triomphants,
Se mêlaient les sanglots des mères, des enfants.
Ah ! nous les connaissons, hélas, l'horrible guerre,
Le fléau qui punit les crimes de la terre,
Le mot qui fait trembler les mères à genoux,
Et qui sème le deuil et la mort parmi nous.
Mais où sont les lauriers que réserve l'Histoire
A celui qui demain forcera la victoire ?
Nul ne les cuillera : les lauriers sont flétris :
Seul un cyprès s'élève aux tombes de nos fils.

(*L'Ami de l'Ordre*, 29th November, 1914.)

The consequences were grotesque. Read the notice posted on the walls by order of the gentle Baron von Hirschberg :

Warning to the Public.

L'Ami de l'Ordre, the only newspaper which has received the authorisation to appear in Namur, has dared to publish,

[1] The solution of the acrostic—*Merde pour les Allemans*—may be translated "Blow the Germans!" This is an interpretation which will not bring a blush to the cheek of the schoolgirl, being, in fact, that given by the school dictionaries.—(*Tr.*)

in its edition of the 29th November, on the first page, and precisely in the spot reserved for the communications of the German authority, a poem which is an insult and an outrage to the German nation.

I express my indignation, and confronted by sentiments as craven as they are scandalous, I order:

1. That the publication of *L'Ami de l'Ordre* is suspended.
2. That the issue in question must be destroyed; whosoever shall be found in possession of a copy will be prosecuted.
3. That the manager and editor be arrested.
4. Judicial proceedings are being taken; the guilty will suffer the severest penalties in conformity with martial law.
5. It is forbidden until a further date to distribute or sell non-German newspapers, and this applies to the entire fortified position of Namur.
6. I require the whole population of Namur to denounce to me the guilty persons, and to bring to my knowledge any serious suspicion, such as might lead to the arrest of the guilty persons who place a whole population in danger.

BARON VON HIRSCHBERG,
Lieutenant-General and Governor of the fortified position of Namur.

(Posted at Namur, the 3rd of December, 1914.)

But on the 8th of December, *L'Ami de l'Ordre* was authorised to reappear; the Germans had too great a need of this journal, which enabled them to spread false news amid the population of Namur. When we say that the Germans permitted it to reappear we are doubtless making a mistake; we ought to say that they forced it to reappear, for as a matter of fact the editors of this journal published it under constraint. They themselves admitted as much openly in the issues for the 7th of October and the 6th of November,

1914.[1] However this may be, in the issue which followed suspension *L'Ami de l'Ordre* humiliated itself with all desirable compunction.

The reader need not be surprised that the Germans should force the Belgian newspapers to appear. Here, says *La Métropole*, quoted by *La Belgique* (of Rotterdam), is what happened at Ostend :

> On the 25th of May, MM. Elleboudt and Verbeeck, directors respectively of the newspapers *Le Littoral* (Catholic) and *L'Écho d'Ostende* (Liberal), who had been invited to republish their journals under the German censorship, but had firmly refused, were sentenced for insubordination to the German authority, M. Elleboudt to three months' and M. Verbeeck to two months' imprisonment.
>
> (*La Belgique*, Rotterdam, 27th June, 1916, p. 2, col. 2.)

Nothing better demonstrates the crawling servility of these journals than their attacks upon those who permit themselves to differ from them in opinion. It will be enough to quote an article which appeared in *Le Bruxellois* (an "independent daily") as the sub-title informs us.

Our Pseudo-Patriots.

A certain pseudo-patriot is spreading certain calumnies in the district of Dinant respecting *Le Bruxellois* and its correspondent. The hypocrite bases his criticism simply upon this : The newspapers now appearing in Belgium are all sold to the enemy (*sic*) . . . and I am acting as correspondent to these "lying" sheets (*resic*). . . .

Is this enlightened "patriot" certain that he has nothing upon his conscience ? For the rest, he is alone in "thinking" in this fashion ; for the whole population of Dinant, since the

[1] See "Belgians under the German Eagle," p. 15.

commencement of the occupation, is convinced that the few newspapers which have not ceased to appear, and those which have since seen the light, have rendered great and real services to the Belgian people, by facilitating the relations between the population of the province and the authorities, by re-animating the commercial life of the country, and above all by clipping the wings of those ridiculous *canards* which used to fly over the country.

This over-interested maker of black-lists is subject to the immediate application of a recent decree, and deserves to be punished. He will do well not to forget this any further; otherwise, we shall remind him of it.

(*Le Bruxellois*, 13th October, 1915.)

The decree with which the writer threatens his critic is worded thus:

Decree Relating to the Repression of Abuses Committed to the Prejudice of Persons of Germanophile Sympathies.

Art. 1.—Whosoever shall attempt to prejudice other persons in respect of their pecuniary situation or their economic resources (for example, their livelihood) by inscribing their names on black lists, by threatening them with certain disadvantages or by resorting to other means of the same kind, because these persons are of German nationality, maintain relations with Germans, or give proof of Germanophile feeling, is liable to a term of imprisonment of not more than two years' duration or a fine not exceeding 10,000 marks. The two penalties may be inflicted concurrently.

Whosoever insults or maltreats another person for one of the above-mentioned reasons is liable to the same penalties, as are all who, by threatening certain injuries or resorting to other analogous procedures, attempt to prevent another person from displaying Germanophile feelings.

If one of the reprehensible actions mentioned in the first and second paragraphs is committed in common by several persons who have concerted to that end, each member of such

a group will be regarded as infringing this decree. In this case the maximum penalty may be increased to five years' imprisonment.

Art. 2.—Infractions of the present decree will be tried by the military courts.

Brussels, the 4th September, 1915.

The Governor-General in Belgium,
BARON VON BISSING,
General-Colonel.

Let us mention two further facts which give evidence of the abject character of our domestic journals. On the death of the greatly lamented Emile Waxweiler the censored newspapers gave an account of his life and occupations as Director of the Institute of Sociology and Professor in the University of Brussels; they spoke of his works and his Extension Lectures; but of all that he accomplished during the war, not a word: his two books, *La Belgique neutre et loyale* and *Le Procès de la Neutralité belge* were not even mentioned; a silence all the more significant in that these books were extremely well-known in Belgium, the first having even been reprinted in that country (see p. 10).

Finally—the last degree of degradation—*Le Bruxellois* publishes daily the names and addresses of young men who are suspected of having crossed the frontier in order to enrol themselves in the Belgian Army.

* * * *

In addition to the newspapers which declare themselves to be free from any dealings with the enemy—and which are consequently the most dangerous—there are some which are directly inspired or edited by

the creatures of Germany. We will mention, among the daily papers on sale in Brussels: *L'Information, De Gazet van Brussel, Het Vlaamsche Nieuws* (Antwerp), *De Vlaamsche Post* (Gand). *La Libre Belgique* (Nos. 45 and 46) has given some information relating to the last-named journal (more commonly known as *De Vlaamsche Pest*).

This journal succumbed in the spring of 1916: probably from auto-intoxication.

Here is an interesting detail relating to the German newspapers which are published in French and in the guise of Belgian journals. By a decision given on the 25th of June, 1915, the Court of First Instance (Brussels) declared that "there are no longer, at the present time, any Belgian journals in Belgium, as the newspapers appearing since the foreign occupation under the German censorship cannot lay claim to this title." The decision was reproduced in full by *La Libre Belgique* (No. 35); but the latter journal had already commented upon it in No. 34.

There are no longer any Belgian Newspapers in Belgium.

The Court of First Instance (Brussels), in reply to a litigant who requested that a decision should be inserted in the "Belgian" newspapers, has just proclaimed: "There are no longer any 'Belgian' newspapers in Belgium"; since the German occupation *the papers which appear daily in this country do not deserve the title.*[1]

[1] This article, which reaches us at the last moment, is necessarily incomplete. This decision, important from more than one point of view, was preceded by some remarkable "whereases." *La Libre Belgique*, which does venture to claim the title of "Belgian" newspaper, is disposed to make an exception in this case to the rule which it has set itself, not to

Justly decided, and expressed in excellent terms. But what will these worthy journals say which have accepted the censorship of the German authorities, and have become its slavish instruments? We wager that they will not on this account cease to flood the country with their interesting issues. Must they no longer put away their handsome thousand franc notes? As for serving the patriotic cause, this is assuredly the least desire of the editors of these lamentable newspapers. The worst of it is that they do an enormous amount of harm, for they deceive the country as to the reality of events. The German, Austrian, and Turkish *communiques* display themselves with their well-known complaisance, while the *communiqués* of the Allies are falsified and mutilated in such a way as to remove, as far as possible, any favourable symptoms. What is to be said of the " tendencious " articles, the skilfully presented news, the lying passages by means of which, deliberately and heedless of the evil they do, these conscientious journalists exert themselves to sow discouragement and error?

A fine task, in truth! These gentlemen are playing an unspeakably contemptible part; their productions should be spurned and placed upon the index by all; they will not in any case lose anything by writing, and we promise them, on the day of approaching liberation, a masterly cleaning up.

(*La Libre Belgique*, No. 34, July, 1915, p. 3, col. 2.)

Is Germany ashamed to allow foreigners to see what she has made of our domestic journals? In any case, their export was forbidden after November, 1915:

accept advertisements, and to insert the judgment of the Court *in extenso* as a "judicial separation." (For conditions, apply to our offices at the usual hours.) If, contrary to all expectation, our journal had not the honour of this insertion, we should find ourselves compelled to place before our readers the decision as our reporter took it down at the trial.

It is Decreed—

By order of the German General Government the following restrictions will immediately enter into force as regards the sending by post of newspapers, reviews, books and music.

The sending by post of newspapers is authorised within the limits of the General Government, and to destinations in the neutral countries hitherto admitted to the postal service with Belgium; Denmark, Luxemburg, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway, only under the following conditions:

(*a*) If the package is sent by the publisher or printer of the journal or review in question; (*b*) If the parcels are addressed to the German authorities, or to German officers or officials, if they are despatched by the latter.

No other packages of journals or reviews can be sent through the post within the limits of the General Government

All exchanges of books or music with the above-mentioned neutral countries are also prohibited.

For correspondence with Germany and the countries allied to Germany—Austria-Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Turkey—no changes have been introduced. Consequently newspapers, reviews, printed books, and music may still be despatched to these countries without any restriction. Similarly, the newspapers sent to postal subscribers are not in any way affected by the above-mentioned restrictions, whether as regards the postal service in the interior of Belgium or the postal service between Belgium and other countries.

The remarkable thing is that Germany is ashamed to betray the fact that she is ashamed. This decree, in effect, does not frankly forbid the despatch of newspapers through the post. The package must be sent by the publisher or the printer. But as it is impossible to subscribe to these journals—no conditions as to subscription being indicated in their pages—you will perceive that this amounts to an absolute prohibition.

Let us further remark that from March, 1916, one

could readily obtain, in Brussels, a so-called independent Belgian newspaper—*La Belgique Indépendante*, published in Geneva. Its sale was authorised in Belgium by the Germans, and the German Press across the Rhine frequently used to borrow from it. This twofold castigation is more than enough; we need not further overwhelm it. *La Belgique Indépendante* ceased to appear in May, 1916.

Several German newspapers which profess to be Belgian help to further the German propaganda abroad. Thus the German authorities see to it that *De Gazet van Brussel* is regularly introduced into Holland. As for the *Bruxellois*, which is gratuitously despatched into Switzerland, it is, in that country, an object of general disgust (see *L'Impartial de Délémont*, 1st June, 1916, quoted by *L'Écho belge*, 15th July, 1916).

4.—Dutch Newspapers Allowed to Enter Belgium

We also receive a few Dutch newspapers whose Germanophilia constitutes a perfect guarantee. The most widely read, and that which was the first to be permitted to enter Belgium, is the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*. But even this often contains articles which the Belgians cannot be allowed to read, and these issues, which are precisely the most interesting, are held up by the censorship.

Thus there are every month some ten or twelve issues which cannot be distributed in Brussels. Moreover, in April and May, 1915, a number of issues which were passed for sale were mutilated by the censorship. On the 10th of May, for example, a

telegram was rendered illegible ; it appeared in column 3, page 2, sheet B, of the morning edition. Here is the translation of the lines blacked out by the censorship :

Chlorine.

London, 9th May (Reuter's Agency). The " Eye-witness " at the British Headquarters (in France and Flanders) gives in his latest description of the recent operations in the neighbourhood of Ypres an account of the manner in which a Prussian officer was taken prisoner, and then led behind the lines, where a handful of British soldiers, placed *hors de combat* by asphyxiating gases, lay at the point of death, making painful efforts to breathe. The Prussian officer stopped, burst out laughing, and pointing to the men outstretched upon the ground, asked : " How do you like that ? " " Eye-witness " terminates his narrative as follows : " The sight of comrades poisoned by the gas, groaning and writhing in pain, twisted with agony, like poisoned vermin, has produced, among the British troops, an exasperation which, let us hope, will be shared by the whole United Kingdom ; it will ensure that we shall not rest before we have obtained complete satisfaction from those who are responsible for these horrors."

Is it now clear why the Belgians feel the need of non-censored newspapers ?

THE END

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